DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 309 656 HE 021 540

AUTHOR Ralston, Jayne; Ralston, Tony
TITLE The Sabbatical Book.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 84p.
AVAILABLE FROM The Roylett Press, 129 Chatham Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216 ($9.95).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *Faculty Development; Higher Education; *Leaves of Absence; *Sabbatical Leaves; Teacher Improvement; Travel
IDENTIFIERS England; State University of New York

ABSTRACT

A handbook of information for faculty going on sabbatical or leave is presented, based on several personal experiences with planning, completing, and returning from sabbaticals. Eleven chapters are as follows: (1) applying for a sabbatical; (2) where to go and for how long; (3) can you afford it (e.g. taxes); (4) renting your house (must you rent, the tax situation, how to rent the house, choosing tenants, showing the house, the lease, preparing the house for tenants, and horror stories); (5) renting a place to live (house or apartment, costs, how to go about renting a house, and questions to ask); (6) schools for your children (language problems, public or private schools, local or international schools, and coping with problems); (7) planning before you leave (e.g. cancelling services, mail, and cars); (8) getting settled (money and banking, furnishings, and charge accounts); (9) travel (how to go and return, buying abroad, and the cost of travel); (10) returning from a sabbatical; and (11) sabbaticals in England (universities in England, living in London, and living in Britain). Three appendices present a list of books to read, a planning checklist, and a discussion of sabbaticals in the State University of New York. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED309656

THE SABBATICAL BOOK

Jayne and Tony Ralston

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

A. Ralston

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

HE 021 540

THE SABBATICAL BOOK

Jayne and Tony Ralston

The Roylott Press, Buffalo, New York

Copyright © 1987 by Jayne and Tony Ralston
129 Chatham Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14216

(All rights reserved)

The Sabbatical Book

Table of Contents

	Page
Preface	iii
Introduction	1
1. Applying for a sabbatical	3
2. Where to go and for how long?	9
3. Can you afford it?	14
4. Renting your house	22
5. Renting a place to live	35
6. Schools for your children	40
7. Planning before you leave	46
8. Getting settled	51
9. Travel	55
10. Returning from a sabbatical	62
11. Sabbaticals in England	64
Appendix 1 - Books to read	71
Appendix 2 - Planning checklist	72
Appendix 3 - Sabbaticals in SUNY	73
Index	76

PREFACE

We first thought about writing this book while on our second sabbatical in 1978-79. But other things intervened and we never got around to it then or in the years before our third sabbatical in 1985-86. Just as well, perhaps. Our recent sabbatical has rounded out our knowledge of the problems of going on sabbatical so that we think this volume will be substantially more useful now than it would have been if we had written it previously.

Our aim is to provide a **handbook** of useful information for faculty going on sabbatical or leave. Although all our academic experience is at the university level, we would expect this book to be useful for pre-college teachers also. It should be most useful to those who have never been away for a semester or a year before. But we expect that "veterans" will find some useful information, too.

No one will, we suppose, agree with all the opinions expressed in this book. Nor should they. Many of the decisions which have to be made are very personal ones for which the experience of others is at best a guide. Other aspects of going away for a year are more universal and there we think that our advice will be generally useful. In any case, subsequent editions of this book — and we hope to update it every few years — will be more useful in proportion to the feedback and criticism we get from our readers. Let us know what you agree with and what you don't, what we have omitted and what we should not have included. In particular, we would like to hear about sabbatical experiences quite different from ours. We shall include these in future editions with by-lines for those who send us sufficiently extensive descriptions.

So let us hear from you on anything and everything to do with sabbaticals. We hope that your sabbatical is as rewarding and successful as ours have been.

Jayne Ralston
Tony Ralston
129 Chatham Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14216

August 1987

Introduction

We've never heard of an academic who chose a career in the professoriate because of the possibility of sabbaticals. Surely it would be unwise to do so because few American academics achieve a first sabbatical before the age of 40. In good times the easy mobility of academics often means that an academic career begins with a number of rather short appointments. And since, alas, credits toward a sabbatical are not transferable (well, usually — we'll come back to this at the end of Chapter 1), the required six year stint in one place seldom begins before one's mid-thirties. In the relatively bad times which are likely to be the norm in academe in the U. S. for a considerable time to come, the difficulty of achieving tenure — and sabbaticals without tenure are very rare — means that the mid-thirties are the likely time to start the appointment that finally leads to tenure.

In retrospect from the vantage of an academic career of a quarter century, our three sabbaticals have probably been our most enjoyable and productive years. So even if their possibility is not in itself sufficient motivation for an academic career, we believe that sabbaticals can — and should — enrich an academic career beyond anything available — even money! — to those poor benighted souls who don't teach or do research for a living.

The approach of a first sabbatical is normally a time of excitement and anticipation. Also it is likely to be a time of worry and concern. What about taking children out of school and their environment? Are the upsets of going and coming back worth it? Will the semester or year away be a financial disaster rather than merely just a drain on your resources? The purpose of this book is to answer some of these questions from the perspective of three sabbaticals, true all in one place (London) but in a variety of circumstances. If you are reading this before your first sabbatical, we must note our opinion that the sabbatical experience can be so pleasant and rewarding that you will likely await the second and subsequent sabbaticals more eagerly than this first one. A new job which you would snap up the year after you return from sabbatical may seem much less attractive the year before you are due for a sabbatical.

Our thrice repeated experience of planning, then going on and returning from a sabbatical certainly haven't resulted in omniscience. But it does add up to a considerable amount of experience, much of this, we think, relevant to others. In this book we have accumulated that experience in the hope — really, the belief — that it will be useful to others planning sabbaticals or leaves.

Inevitably there will be questions unanswered and problems unforeseen. It is, therefore, our intention to update this book every few years to include the suggestions and experiences of others with attribution and/or by-line. Like so many tasks, this one, we feel, must be undertaken a first time in order to get it right in subsequent editions.

Chapter 1
Applying for a Sabbatical

Fringe benefit or privilege? A year's holiday or a time for writing, research, study and renewal? Boondoggle or a near necessity for the active scholar?

The official answers to these questions are the second of the two choices in each case. The former choices are often the answers given by non-academics, in particular by members of boards of trustees and other groups who so seldom understand what a college or university really is. The true answers, honesty compels us to admit, lie somewhere in between.

American academics are seldom aware that the wide — if not universal — availability of sabbaticals at American colleges and universities is not matched in other countries where, if available at all, sabbaticals are much more difficult to obtain than at most U. S. institutions. Still, we know of no university or college where a sabbatical is a right rather than a privilege. The policies of American colleges usually state something to the effect that a "sabbatical leave **may be granted** after six years of service (and, subsequently, after each additional six years of service) for one semester at full pay or for one (academic) year at half pay". Thus, the option is the institution's not the professor's.

Normally there is a semi-formal procedure for application for a sabbatical which includes some or all of the following:

- a statement of purpose describing what it is hoped will be accomplished on the sabbatical and why this would be a "good thing" for the individual and the institution.
- an indication of where the sabbatical will be spent and why the choice is appropriate (i.e. available colleagues and facilities rather than sun and surf).
- some reflections on how the institution will be able to struggle on in one's absence and, perhaps, an endorsement from the department head on this score.
- a commitment to return to the institution for at least one year after the sabbatical.
- an agreement to write a report on what was accomplished during the sabbatical upon returning from it.

Some remarks on these requirements may be helpful:

1. We have never met a professor whose creativity was not up to writing a brilliant statement of purpose, well-motivated and supported by appropriate documentation. Like the relation of catalog descriptions to what is actually taught in courses, the statement of purpose and what is actually accomplished are often not recognizable as being related. Of course, this may be because it is so hard to predict the results of research almost a year before you commence work on it. In any case, give your imagination free rein. Nothing except your

ethics, conscience and the theory of probability should inhibit you.

2. If you can display an invitation to go where you say you are planning to go, that is always helpful. And, of course, such invitations are notoriously easy to obtain from friends and colleagues, particularly if all you want at the host institution is an office and related facilities rather than money.

3. For obvious reasons one should be careful not to argue that one will not be missed at all. It may, therefore, be helpful to:
   - point to a colleague returning from a sabbatical the year you are going who will be your "replacement".
   - argue that the advanced courses you teach which no one else can teach need not be offered the year you will be away.
   - indicate how you will maintain contact with or even visit your graduate students.

   Since many departments like to have visitors, who may be professors on sabbatical from other institutions, it will always strengthen your case if you can find someone who wants to take your place for the year and, in particular, who is willing to teach your courses.

4. In all seriousness, we believe that the commitment to return should be an inviolate one. Although we have heard some unsubstantiated anecdotes about legal action against a faculty member who did not return after a sabbatical, we do not know of any confirmed cases. And, to be sure, the reluctance of colleges and universities to undertake legal action of this kind makes such a suit quite unlikely except perhaps in a most flagrant case. But just because a sabbatical really is a privilege and because your word should really be your bond on this matter, returning to the institution which granted the sabbatical should be an inviolate moral obligation.

   So what happens if, totally unexpectedly, you are offered a position you just "can't turn down" while you are on sabbatical. Sadly, perhaps, this has never happened to us. But, if it had, we would have requested a release from the obligation to return. If this would not have been granted, we would have met the obligation to return - and, of course, would have tried to reactivate the new appointment for the following year.

5. Writing a report should not be an undue hardship. In our experience such reports need seldom be lengthy. Even so, they are probably seldom read by higher authority, no more often probably than the annual reports required of most faculty members. The real purpose of these reports, particularly at public colleges and universities, is to provide documentary ammunition to forestall legislative or bureaucratic attempts to restrict sabbaticals.

Returning then to the questions asked at the beginning of this chapter, our conclusions are:

1. Sabbaticals are a privilege and this is the way it should be. When there is no valid reason to believe that the time away from normal duties will be put to good use, there are probably good grounds for

a denial of a sabbatical request (but see Appendix 3). But it is the rare university administrator who is willing to deny a sabbatical to an eligible — in point of service only — professor even when the administrator has good reason to believe that no significant value to the institution or the faculty member is likely to accrue from it.

2. Almost everyone knows examples of sabbaticals which have turned out to be little more than a holiday for a year. But the professorial existence **does** require periodic change and renewal if it is also to be a scholarly existence. We have not just found our sabbaticals professionally rewarding but we have also returned from them more enthusiastic about teaching than when we left, and more ready to put up with the usual petty frustrations of university life. Boondoggle it can be and sometimes is but not for the teacher or researcher who is not ready to slide gracefully into retirement.

(We note — en passant — that sabbaticals are even more necessary for administrators — department heads, deans etc. — than for teaching and research faculty. The need for renewal is greater. The fight to avoid disciplinary obsolescence is more necessary. But there is a rub. A professor can normally be spared for a year without significant upset to the organization. Teaching and research are often — if not always — individual activities which often impinge hardly at all on the activities of others or on the organizational requirements of the institution. Not so with administrators. It is too often the case that harm, often severe, is done to an organization by having a temporary ("acting") administrator for a year. Few readers of this book will not have experienced that delusion, particularly peculiar to universities, that an important job can be done ably by an acting administrator who, more often than not, becomes catatonic whenever a decision needs to be made. What's the solution? Give administrators sabbaticals but only on the proviso that they must resign from their administrative position. How many college administrators are still any good at their jobs — if they ever were — after six years in them?)

Despite what the foregoing may have implied, applying for a sabbatical is not necessarily straightforward. The following advice may be helpful:

1. Apply early in the year before you expect to go. If it is true that sabbaticals are seldom denied, it is less rare for them to be postponed. If too many people, particularly in a small department, are eligible for a sabbatical in the same year, one or more may have to be postponed to enable the department to meet its teaching commitments. Although seniority is the normal guide to determine whose sabbatical is postponed, whose not, the early bird may worm the sabbatical from an unwary administration before anyone thinks of the problem of too many sabbaticals.

   Actually few departments or institutions have rules concerning priorities for sabbaticals. If a junior faculty member had his/her sabbatical postponed one year, does he/she have higher priority than a newly eligible senior faculty member the next year? The answer

should, we think, be yes. But suppose the postponement was the junior faculty member's choice for whatever personal or professional reasons? Should the senior faculty member, who may have been planning a sabbatical for some time, have his/her sabbatical postponed just because of a choice made by a junior colleague the previous year? Not so simple. In any case, this lends weight to the advice on early application. (Sure, department heads should know who is or is not planning to take a sabbatical in a given year. But often they aren't clever enough to do their homework. And, at some point in the academic year, it becomes unreasonable to postpone a decision on one sabbatical application just because someone else's mind isn't made up.)

And we would note that planning a sabbatical is a complicated, time-consuming task. The earlier you apply, perhaps the earlier your sabbatical will be approved.

2. Don't be bashful about asking for more than you expect or even for more than — with all modesty — you deserve. The worst that can happen is that you'll get only what you deserve, whatever that is.

Most faculty would be surprised to learn how many of their colleagues have, for example, received a full year sabbatical at more than half pay or with other perquisites like travel funds to return occasionally to the home institution.

Sometimes the extra pay takes the form of a "research leave" and sometimes it is just added to the normal sabbatical stipend. How or why do such things happen at all?

- A faculty member may have served so diligently, particularly in an administrative post, that he/she really deserves more than a normal sabbatical.
- A faculty member may be so important to an institution that even without any threats, real or implied, a larger than normal award may be made to keep the "star" happy.
- Because of the slipshod fashion in which so many colleges and universities are administered, sometimes a request just gets approved because no one has the gumption to deny it or just because things slip between cracks. Doubtful, you may think. Well, here are two case studies.

In 1971 one of us was the head of a department of computer science which he had founded four years earlier. For three of those years and for two prior years he had also been director of computer services until he resigned in 1970. In applying for our 1971-72 sabbatical a full year at full pay was requested on the grounds of administrative service above and beyond the call of duty, holding two demanding administrative jobs simultaneously for three years etc. etc. Convincing though you may find this case, would you expect your administration to be convinced? If your answer is yes, would it still be yes if the president of your university (who would, of course, have to approve such a request) had just been installed despite public statements from various faculty members, of whom you were one, that he was not fit to hold

this post? And how would you fancy your chances if, in early spring, just months before you were to leave, the State threatened to abolish sabbaticals entirely (in a move aimed not at the State University but rather at the State Department of Mental Hygiene)? Nevertheless the result was that the request for a year's sabbatical at full pay was approved with no extra conditions at all. How did this happen? We're not sure. It may have been because the chaos caused by the threat to abolish sabbaticals followed only weeks later by a dictum that this would not apply to State University faculty resulted in the additional request being approved almost by accident. More likely, we think, is the common tendency of administrators to approve something in order not to be the bad guy and in the belief that higher authority will do the dirty work. By the time the request gets to higher authority — dean or provost or president or whomever — it may be so far removed from its origin that it just gets approved because it appears to be a strongly endorsed request.

You must remember that, even to administrators with budget woes, a sabbatical appears to be something which can be granted without cost to the institution. If only half salary is required, then it may look like a way to help balance the budget by sequestering the other half salary. Even if the other half salary is used to hire a replacement or if the sabbatical is at full pay, it doesn't really seem to cost anything. At worst the institution muddles along with one less body for a year.

In the event SUNY at Buffalo got away without paying the full salary for 1971-72. A research grant was funded and it paid the other half of the salary. (Did the knowledge that this grant had been applied for help to get the full salary approved in the hope that the grant would be funded? Perhaps, but, if so, there is a lesson here, too. If you're going to ask for more than you deserve, the possibility that you won't need it even if granted may help to achieve a positive decision.)

Seven years later, in 1977-78, it was sabbatical application time again. This time one of us was still a department head but had indicated a desire to be relieved when he went on sabbatical. (You will infer that the advice given earlier, namely that, when an administrator goes on sabbatical, the administrative post should be resigned, was not followed in 1971-72. Suffice it to say that there was, of course, no request that the department headship be given up although, in retrospect, it would have been much better for the University and for us if such a policy had been enforced.) The same president was still in office but not only were relations with him no better than they had been seven years earlier but, additionally, consistent criticism of the administration as a whole had soured relations with higher authority quite generally. Nevertheless, not lacking in chutzpah, we applied for a year's sabbatical at full pay on the grounds that it was owed to us since the previous time we had, in fact, supported the other half salary from a research grant. And it was granted with the only condition — a quite reasonable one — that there be periodic visits to Buffalo to advise and help graduate students. Our opinion is that the request for full salary was essentially without merit. However valid our argument had been

seven years previously, the university had done as much as could have been asked for. The fact that, in the event, it did not have to cough up the extra half salary in no way committed it to doing so seven years hence.

Why then was the sabbatical at full pay granted? Again, we don't know. But the administrator who made the decision (not the president) was an unfailingly nice man who never took personally any of our criticisms of his administration. He was, however, not good at making hard decisions and, in this case, took the easy way out. (In line with the Peter Principle which operates so often at universities, having not been very successful in his position at SUNY at Buffalo, he left shortly thereafter for a higher level post at another university.)

Our lesson is not that you will be as fortunate as we have been. Rather it is that you have only your bank balance to lose by not trying.

A final word. If you have already had one or more sabbaticals or, perhaps, even if you have not, you will be loath to change institutions a year or two before you would be eligible for a sabbatical. Unfortunately sabbatical privileges are seldom transferrable from one college to another. But sometimes they are. We have a colleague who, in transferring from one SUNY institution to another, negotiated full retention of his sabbatical entitlement. And, in any case, it doesn't hurt to ask. If another university wants to recruit you badly enough, it may agree to credit you with all the time toward a sabbatical built up at your current institution.

Chapter 2
Where to Go and for How Long

How Long

Since where to go depends considerably on whether you are going for one semester or a year, we'll consider the "how long?" question first.

A one semester sabbatical does not, of course, mean just four or four and a half months. Together with the preceding (or succeeding) summer it can mean 7 or 8 months. (And, if you are on a quarter system, proper scheduling of the quarters you don't teach anyhow may get you pretty close to a year.) For some, there will be no choice; it will just not be financially feasible to go on half pay for a year (but see below). The only possibility is one semester at full pay. If that is the only choice, take it.

But, if you can possibly swing it, we would strongly urge you to take a full year. Both professionally and personally a full year sabbatical is more than twice as valuable as half a year. Even if you are going away to work with a colleague or a group whom you know well and even if you are just going to write a book and need only a library, there is some inevitable upset both going and coming back. Just packing up the books and papers you need to take with you and settling your affairs in your department and university takes some time and, more important, thinking about it and preparing yourself psychologically for the move takes more time away from productive activity than you might expect. Then getting settled in a new office, learning how to use the library, meeting all the people in a new department etc. takes some time. And then you have to repeat a fair amount of this when you return home. The amount of time left for productive work will be much less than you expect, certainly much less than you would hope.

But the upset in your professional life will be considerably less than that in your personal life if you have a spouse and children. The mental and physical effort of preparing to go, going, preparing to come back and returning can take weeks or more at both ends and will certainly disrupt your professional life more than the purely professional matters discussed in the previous paragraph. Going away for a full year is not essentially more difficult in these respects than just going for a semester. Although we have never taken a one semester sabbatical, our experience of the problems outlined above convinces us that we would never do it unless there were just no possibility at all of going for a year.

Putting a summer together with a semester would improve things somewhat but, since you are likely to want to use the summer for some vacation and/or travel, it doesn't extend the time for realizing the pro-

fessional values of a sabbatical very much.

Where to Go

Some people choose to take their sabbaticals at home. For reasons we don't entirely understand, they think their surroundings and colleagues make for the best of all possible worlds. True, the upsets described above are avoided if you stay at home. So, in principle, you should be able to accomplish more writing, research, renewal or whatever. We doubt that it usually works out that way. Officially you may have no teaching or committee obligations but it may be harder than you think to avoid some involvement in departmental affairs especially if, as is so common, they are of an internecine kind. Anyhow it isn't just a rest from teaching that is what a sabbatical is for. New faces, places and experiences are valuable — even necessary — for most scholarly work. So get away if you possibly can. The rest of this chapter — and portions but not all — of the rest of this book assume that you are going away.

Most professors planning a sabbatical start arranging where to go at least a year before the sabbatical year. The most obvious reason for this is money. Unless you are going on a one semester, full pay sabbatical, or you have managed to wangle more than half pay for a full year, or you have some other source of income like a research grant, you will probably have to make up some or most of the other half salary by providing some services — teaching is the most obvious possibility — at whatever institution you go to. (But, if you have to teach while on sabbatical, won't that negate much of the value of going in the first place? Well, it could. Only once on our sabbaticals has there been any teaching involved at all and that was just one series of lectures during one semester, far less than a normal load. Surely teaching anything near a full load would vitiate much of the value of a sabbatical.)

The time was when an American professor could go abroad and come pretty close to living comfortably on an American half salary, perhaps even with some traveling thrown in. Such days have, however, long gone unless, we suppose, you go to a third world country. Even with the high dollar of recent years, the foreign countries of choice for most people — Western Europe, Japan and countries of the British Commonwealth — are almost as expensive, sometimes even more expensive than the United States. Not atypical perhaps is the comment of a colleague while spending a sabbatical in the late 70s in Geneva: "We love it aside from being financially ruined."

So, whether or not you stay in the United States, supplementing sabbatical half pay will be necessary for most people. If you are going to apply for a research grant to supplement your university pay, then it probably won't be your first such application and you know the procedural ropes in whatever agency you are applying to. If it's the federal

government, long lead times are necessary for almost all sources. To go away one fall, it will be necessary to apply for support no later than the spring a year and a half earlier if you want to hear about the grant in time to make plans to go away. If you want to hear before you even apply for your sabbatical, then the autumn two years before you plan to go away is none too soon to apply.

(We claim no great expertise on non-university sources of funds for sabbaticals. The usual federal agencies — the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health — are standard sources. But don't overlook the private foundations — Rockefeller, Ford, Sloan etc. Sometimes they have fellowship or other programs tailor-made for someone who has a very specific research program which can reasonably be expected to be completed in a year.)

If you're going to try to get a teaching or research position to supplement your salary, then early planning is surely necessary. Since few colleges or universities or research institutions have lots of loose cash hanging around for paying visiting faculty, it is a good idea to start making arrangements as early as possible, over a year in advance if you can manage it. If you have some special or unusual knowledge, then having you give an advanced course or seminar may well be attractive to an institution which does not have anyone with your expertise on its faculty. And, of course, giving such a course or, still better, a seminar may actually help you accomplish your research program for the sabbatical year.

If, on the other hand, you pursue the scrounging of the other half of your salary in parallel with your application and the rest of the planning, you will, to put it mildly, just be adding to the excitement and uncertainty of the whole process.

Obtaining a sabbatical teaching or research position abroad is a particularly difficult undertaking now. Most foreign universities have their financial problems just like American colleges and universities. Some have considerably worse ones. On top of that, high unemployment in most countries has resulted in quite stringent rules about getting permission to work for any foreigner. (This isn't the case for a national of one country of the European Economic Community going to another but that is of no use to Americans.) You may need someone very well-connected, indeed, to overcome these difficulties if you want to supplement your sabbatical pay with funds in any foreign currency.

Given the above, how do you decide where to go? Most of the answers we give here will seem pretty obvious:

1. One thing it depends on is what stage in your academic career you are at. For a junior faculty member a sabbatical may be a chance to work with or in the laboratory of an eminent senior colleague. Such sabbaticals are highly recommended but, unless you already

know your senior colleague well, early preparation, particularly if you want support, is advisable. When working with a senior colleague is your aim, the number of possibilities will seldom be large. But, if there is more than one, work in parallel, particularly in making the initial contacts. It is, of course, seldom cricket to enter into actual negotiations with more than one potential sabbatical home at a time. (To borrow a term from computer science, "parallel processing" is a good idea in sabbatical planning generally. There is just so much to do that you have to do more than one thing at the same time.)

2. Often younger faculty don't realize the breadth of opportunity open to them for sabbaticals. Besides another university or a research institution like the Brookings Institution or a national laboratory, there may be government, business or industrial organizations which might be happy to have the equivalent of a consultant around for a year without having to pay consultant rates. It need hardly be said that, in many disciplines, exposure to the "real world" may be salutary and valuable, surely meeting the aims of a sabbatical.

3. Should you stay in the United States or go abroad? Of course, there is no generally correct answer. Professional constraints may be such that you really don't have a lot of choice. But let's suppose that there are a number of institutions in a variety of places to which you could go with equivalent professional benefit. Staying in the U.S. is certainly the line of least resistance. Moving problems and schools for children problems will usually be minimized. So also culture shock will usually be minimized (but, we suppose, not necessarily so). As lovers of travel and proponents of the broadening most Americans could use, we believe that all sabbatical takers should at least consider the option of going abroad. (We don't, by the way, have Canada in mind as we write this. A lovely country but, at least to a couple who live in Buffalo, not very exotic. If you live in New Orleans, you may feel differently.) Problems there are and many of these are addressed later in this book. But the rewards have overwhelmed the problems for us. True, we've taken the easy way out to some extent by choosing an English-speaking country. But, while going to a country where you don't know the language adds one more level of problems, we know of a considerable number of people who have done this. Most — admittedly, not all — had very good experiences. Learning as much of the language — and about the culture — of the country you are going to beforehand will help a lot. But going to a country with a language you don't read, write or speak for six months or a year can be daunting; it requires some courage. And, remember, the problems of adjustment at both ends of a sabbatical will be exacerbated if you have a new language to which to adjust.

Our general advice is to let your imagination loose in trying to find sabbatical possibilities.

Chapter 3
Can You Afford It?

You may think that the calculation of whether you can afford it or not is pretty straightforward. It's not. In this chapter we'll discuss the things you need to consider and what we've learned about them to help you make a decision that only you can make.

To begin, one general precept. A sabbatical is an investment not just for your career but also for your life. At best it offers an experience for you and your family that is denied to almost all others whose value is inestimable. Don't forget this when, after doing all the calculations, you find that, relatively speaking anyhow, taking a sabbatical would be a financial disaster.

The income side of the equation is pretty easy. We assume you know your income — sabbatical pay, research pay, pay from the institution you are going to plus whatever other sources you may have. It's your expenses that aren't so easy to figure. Our experience may suggest some things to you that you might not have thought of.

First, some fairly obvious things, both plus and minus:

1. House expenses — Must you rent your house? What will it cost you if you don't? What may it cost you — in pain — if you do? We'll postpone our answers to these questions to the next chapter whose subject is renting your house.

2. Cars — You may not need two cars on sabbatical, particularly if you go abroad where, unlike most of the United States, public transportation is likely to be good. The savings here on running expenses, depreciation and insurance will be clear to you. (If you go abroad, there is one aspect of car expenses for which running one car may cost as much as running two in the U.S. and that is gasoline. Typical gasoline prices in Western Europe are twice or more what they are in the U.S. ranging — in early 1986 — from $2.25 to $2.75 a gallon.) One other thing to consider is the possible savings in buying a new car abroad if your sabbatical year would be a convenient year to do this. We'll describe our experiences in Chapter 9.

3. Travel — The expense of getting to your sabbatical location and returning from it is the only expense we have in mind here. Sure, you are likely to incur other travel expenses if you go to a part of the U.S. or the world which you don't already know well. But these are like any other vacation expenses — in theory, at least, under your total control. As to the expense of going and coming back, there are some tax considerations which we discuss below.

4. General cost of living considerations — You may be going from a high cost area to a low cost one or vice versa. The effect on your budget may be considerable. It is worth some effort to find out just how much things like housing, utilities and food cost where you are going. If you're staying in the U.S., you'll have a pretty good idea about these. But, if you are going abroad, the cost of these items may not only be quite different than at home but some of the differences may surprise you, sometimes pleasantly, sometimes not.
5. Schools for children — This can be a crucial item, plus or minus. If your children are in private schools now, you may save a bundle if you can use public schools where you go. Or vice versa. We'll come back to this in Chapter 6 which is devoted to all aspects of schools for your children.

Taxes

For most people going on sabbatical the most significant consideration — and the trickiest — is income taxes. Here alone the savings may — we repeat, **may** — be so great as to dwarf all other considerations. We begin with a caveat: **We are not income tax experts** so everything we say here should be checked with an accountant or the IRS or, better still, with **The Tax Guide for College Teachers** published by the Academic Information Service, Inc., Post Office Box 6296, Washington, DC 20015 or the **The Teachers Income Tax Guide** published by the Library of Congress (Catalog number 72-185181). Why, "better still"? Because we have discovered that few accountants are really knowledgeable about the rules which apply to professors going on sabbatical and IRS agents are likely to be even less knowledgeable (although some IRS publications are useful — more on that below). We have found The Tax Guide for College Teachers (TGCT) and the Teachers Income Tax Guide (TITG) to be accurate and useful sources of all sorts of tips which are useful not just for going on sabbatical. What follows here is not taken directly from TGCT or TITG but reflects our experience which has often been based on what we learned from these publications. Page references are to the 1986 edition of TGCT and the 1987 edition of TITG.

We'll focus here on the situation where a family leaves its normal home to spend up to a year somewhere else on sabbatical. At the end of this section we'll consider briefly the situation where the sabbatical is spent at home, perhaps with some travel related to the purposes of the sabbatical.

The essential point here is that a sabbatical is treated for tax purposes just like a temporary job away from home. Thus, while nothing in the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) applies specifically to sabbaticals (although Section 1.162-5 does touch on this subject — see below), there

is a considerable body of individual case rulings that confirm the deductibility of sabbatical expenses **in just the same way that job expenses at a temporary location are deductible.** Our own experience, as we shall relate, certainly bears out this contention.

Despite the unequivocal nature of the previous paragraph, there are a number of tricky features about taxes while on sabbatical:

1. If you take a leave of absence (rather than a sabbatical) for a year or less to go to another university (or elsewhere), then pretty clearly you have taken a temporary job away from home in the normal interpretation of the IRC and your temporary job expenses are deductible. If the leave of absence is for more than a year, things get a bit muddy although it seems to be the case that leaves up to two years can still be considered temporary so long as you satisfy certain tests relating to your contacts with your original location and institution (TGCT, pp. 241-242).

2. But suppose you are on a half pay sabbatical at another institution which is also paying you about half your salary. Is this also a temporary job away from home? The answer seems to be yes.

3. Now suppose you are not being paid at all at your sabbatical location where (let us assume) you have been invited by a (research) colleague and have been provided with office space and perhaps secretarial service also. Your entire income (or, anyhow, almost all of it) comes from your home institution or from your home institution plus a (federal) research grant. What now? We know of no specific IRS decisions on such cases. But:
   a) When a research grant is part of your compensation and you have been invited by your sabbatical institution to pursue your research, it seems very likely that the temporary job away from home rules apply. If your sabbatical institution has equipment or personnel **necessary** to your research, then the case would be still stronger. In our first sabbatical in London in 1971-72, there was an invitation to do research at the Institute of Computer Science of the University of London but the research could have been done anywhere. Our sabbatical expense deductions were never questioned by the IRS.
   b) But even where there is no research grant involved and no pay from the sabbatical institution, as was the case with our second sabbatical in London in 1978-79, it seems to be the case that the IRS does not question reasonable deductions for temporary job expenses. Certainly this has been the experience of others besides ourselves and we know of no counterexamples.

In summary, then, it appears that, whatever the specific circumstances, a family taking a sabbatical away from home may take

deductions for travel and living expenses suitable for a temporary job away from home. Given that this has been true for a considerable number of years now, is there any guarantee that it will always be true? Alas, no. But the probability that the IRS will reverse its long standing attitude on this is small and, even if it did, the tax courts might well not uphold the change. You can be sure that any attempt by the IRS to change its implicit sabbatical policy would bring out the "education lobby" in full force just as did the attempt by the IRS some years ago to tax tuition payments by colleges and universities for faculty children.

But what you need to know is just what expenses are and are not deductible. The official rules are pretty clear: You may deduct travel expenses to and from the sabbatical and all your normal living expenses at your sabbatical location (rent, food, laundry, commuting between where you live and your sabbatical office) (TGCT, p. 244, TITG, p. 40). Remember, however, that "your" means only the expenses of the family member on sabbatical and not those of spouse or children. Even here there are some ambiguities which we shall get to shortly. First, though, we emphasize what is probably clear already: Tax deductions while on sabbatical can amount to thousands of dollars and can make a crucial difference in whether or not you can afford to take a sabbatical.

Now let's be more specific about these deductions.

1. Travel expenses to and from the sabbatical location are deductible only for the faculty member on sabbatical. Of course, if you travel by car, these expenses will include most of the total family expenses. In 1986 IRS rules allowed a deduction of 21 cents per mile and your costs for meals and hotels or motels. For lodging you may charge what your cost would have been if you had been traveling alone.

2. As to living expenses at the sabbatical location, the crucial issue is what fraction of your housing costs may be deducted. If your family accompanying you including yourself has n members, is it 1/nth of your cost? Or is it what lodging just for yourself would have cost? Certainly it's closer to the latter than the former. But what would lodging for just one person cost? Is it the cost of a hotel room for the entire stay, even if that is a whole year? The correct answers are not obvious to us. On both our 1971-72 and 1978-79 sabbaticals in London we deducted the full cost of our housing on the grounds that the cost of a hotel for one of us would have been in excess of our actual costs. For the first of these, when we had our four children with us, this cost was almost $900/month at the prevailing exchange rate. (Remember — this was 1971.) The difference between being able to deduct this entire amount and only some small portion of it was, it need hardly be said, very important to our budget. This deduction was not challenged by the IRS and neither was the more modest one we took in 1978-79. It is, moreover, our impression that

similar deductions by colleagues have also not been challenged.

By the way, we note here — and will expand on below — that we have always listed all our deductions very carefully on a separate schedule of our tax return. Thus, the $900/month mentioned above was explicitly listed on this schedule.

It is still too soon to know what will happen with our 1985 and 1986 tax returns. In any case, however, we are handling our sabbatical deductions in a new way for those two years as we'll describe later in this chapter.

3. For living expenses other than lodging you can only deduct for the person on sabbatical. (Except that, if you pay your spouse for assistance, say, with your research, it may be possible to deduct your spouse's expenses also; we have no direct experience with this but it is worth investigating.) How much can you deduct? Remember that the deduction is not just for food but for laundry, local transportation etc. In 1971-72 we deducted $15/day for these expenses. In 1978-79 we deducted $30/day for 1978 and $32.50/day for 1979. These figures were estimates of what we actually spent and also took into account what would have been spent by a person alone who would naturally have been eating more in restaurants, sending laundry out etc. They were never questioned by the IRS. Our general impression from people we have asked about this is that these deductions were rather modest and that substantially higher ones would not have been questioned. A plausible rule of thumb is to deduct whatever the federal government per diem rate is for the place where you take your sabbatical (less, of course, the housing portion of this if you deduct it separately). We have been told that the federal per diem rate in London in 1978-79 was over $75/day (including lodging) so that our deduction, which was only about $60/day, was quite modest. The current federal per diem rate for Washington is $112/day; Washington is expensive but many cities in the U.S. and the rest of the world are more expensive

In both 1971-72 and in 1978-79 we deducted about $15,000 for housing and living expenses. It hardly needs emphasizing that the tax savings from deductions of this magnitude can mean the difference between whether or not you can afford a sabbatical on half pay. We were not audited by the IRS for any of these four years. Were we just lucky? Perhaps. We should emphasize that in all four years our tax returns were absolutely open and above board. In all four years, instead of using Schedule 2106 for employee business expenses, we attached a separate itemized schedule with a lot more detail than would have been required on Schedule 2106. We think that all tax deductions for sabbatical expenses should be stated as completely and clearly as possible so that there can be no doubt as to what you are doing and

why you are doing it. You may get audited and your deductions may be questioned (which doesn't necessarily mean that they will be disallowed) but there will not be any possibility that you can be accused of evasion.

If we were going to deduct our housing and other expenses for our recently completed 1985-86 sabbatical, the total would come to well over $20,000 because, despite the still relatively high dollar in 1985-86, living, as we were, right in central London was very expensive, indeed. However, we did our taxes differently for these two years as we'll now explain. What we are doing is available to you **only** if you are taking a sabbatical outside the United States.

For many years Americans living abroad have been able to exclude a considerable amount of their income **earned** abroad from federal income tax (up to $80,000 in 1987). But until 1981 you had to be out of the United States for 11 of 12 months in a calendar year (i.e. 1 January to 31 December) or for 17 of 18 consecutive months, neither of which did college professors on sabbatical much good. But, the tax act of 1981 changed the rules so that now one way to qualify is to be abroad for 330 days in any period of 12 months. (So far as we know, the tax reform act of 1986 did not change this.) Thus, full year sabbaticals abroad would seem to qualify. There are, however, two possible hookers:

1. Is sabbatical pay really earned abroad or is it payment for the previous six years service? As this is written, there have been no IRS rulings on this matter but, if you have submitted a sabbatical proposal which outlines a bona fide plan of study or research, it would be hard for the IRS to argue that you were not earning your sabbatical pay while on sabbatical (TGCT, pp. 341-342).

2. The more serious question concerns a requirement in the law that your **tax home** be abroad if you are to qualify for the deduction for living abroad. In principle, if you rent out your usual home while you are on sabbatical and if you rent a home in a foreign country during the year you are abroad, then you should be able to argue that your tax home has shifted abroad from the U.S. (Even if you spend your sabbatical in more than one place and rent lodging in each place, a case can be made that your tax home has shifted.) There are IRS tests to apply in this case (TGCT, pp. 241-243) which are arguably satisfied for most sabbatical situations. However, a recent (late 1985) IRS ruling holds that an "American teaching in England in an exchange program and planning to return to his U. S. job and home after one year had a U. S. tax home and didn't qualify for the foreign income exemption" (Wall Street Journal, 16 October 1985). It's hard to see how a professor on sabbatical differs much from a teacher on an exchange program.

On the other hand, the 330 days in any 12 month period condi-

tion is meaningless if you can't satisfy the tax home requirement when your stay abroad is only for one year. It seems reasonable to argue that, when Congress legislated the 330-days-in-any-12-month-period provision, it meant it to be applicable in normal circumstances of a one-year stay abroad. Therefore, it seems to us (although we have no experience with tax courts whatever) that the tax courts are unlikely to uphold the IRS interpretation in this case.

Our strategy, therefore, has been to take the foreign earned income deduction (on Form 2555) on our 1985 tax return and to do the same for our 1986 return. To find out what happened, read the next edition of this book. The worst that can happen, by the way, is that the foreign income deduction will be disallowed and that we shall have to fall back to deducting our sabbatical expenses as in the past. (You can't claim both the foreign income deduction **and** the temporary job expense deduction!) Actually the difference between deducting our foreign earned income and our sabbatical expenses is not all that much.

Whatever provisions of the tax laws you wish to take advantage of, **keep good records.** We have never been audited but **you** may be. It probably isn't necessary to keep all your supermarket and laundry bills but you should keep good records of your housing and major travel expenses. We have always had such records just in case and, as well, we have been ready to justify our per diem expenses through a comparison of the cost of living in London and Buffalo. If you are audited, you may not win even if you have good records but you will almost certainly lose if you do not.

Here are some miscellaneous remarks about taxes and sabbaticals which may be useful:

1. If you spend a sabbatical traveling rather than in just one or two places, your expenses are probably still deductible so long as the travel has a bona fide scholarly or educational purpose. We doubt, however, that, even if you are a sociologist, a Cook's tour of the topless beaches of southern Europe in order to compare them to their American counterparts would qualify.
2. If you spend your sabbatical at home, you don't qualify for much in the way of special tax breaks. But if you do some traveling from your home base relevant to the purpose of your sabbatical, the expenses incurred should be deductible.
3. The IRS publication, Tax Guide for U. S. Citizens abroad, is worth getting because it contains some useful hints.
4. We mentioned Section 1.162-5 of the Internal Revenue Code above. This deals with the deductibility of education-related expenses. In Revenue Ruling 64-176 the question of travel expenses for

educational-related travel during a sabbatical is discussed. We have not found the arcane language typical of such IRS rulings very useful. But the authors of TGCT seem to understand it and have summarized it nicely on pp. 248-249 (see also TITG, pp. 39-42). Suffice it to say here that what we have said above seems consistent with this ruling.

A final word. The issues discussed in this chapter are worth some research. What you conclude from your study may make the difference between going on sabbatical or not, or between a merely good and an excellent experience on sabbatical.

Chapter 4
Renting Your House

Perhaps nothing causes quite so much trauma during the preparation for a sabbatical — or upon return — as matters related to renting your house or apartment. Almost everyone has heard horror stories about how rented houses were wrecked. We've heard a few ourselves, a couple of which we'll relate below. Happily our own experiences with renting have been pretty good but the possibility of disaster can't be denied. In this chapter we'll first try to answer the question:

Must you rent your house?

and then we'll discuss how to go about renting your house and what precautions to take if you do — or don't — rent your house.

Must you rent?

There are two questions you must ask first:

1. Can you afford **not** to rent your house?
2. What can happen to a house which is empty for six months or a year?

We know more about the first question than the second so we'll start with it.

You know how much your house costs you each month (mortgage, taxes, utilities, maintenance) although we're continually surprised by the number of people who only calculate the gross cost and not the net after taking into account the tax savings from the deduction of mortgage interest. (Real estate taxes are no long deductible on Schedule A (itemized deductions) but see below about the handling of rental income.) If you go away for a year and leave the house empty, you'll still have the mortgage and taxes to pay. Your utility costs will go down but if, like us, you live in a cold climate where the heating bills are the lion's share of these costs, you probably won't save as much as you might guess because, of course, the heat must be kept on all winter even though the thermostat can be set as low as it will go. As to maintenance, it's true that your kids won't be throwing balls through windows or ruining kitchen tables in cooking experiments or getting finger marks on the walls but many maintenance costs (e.g. outside painting, new roof, new furnace) are only marginally affected by whether or not you are living in the house.

The result of any such calculation is likely to be that you can't afford **not** to rent your house if you're going on sabbatical for a year. For a semester the conclusion may not be quite so clear cut but it is still likely that you will wish to rent your house although it won't sur-

prise you to hear that renting for a few months is more difficult than renting for a year. Most of the rest of this chapter assumes that you will be renting your house. At the end, however, we note a few precautions to take if you are going to leave your house empty when you go away.

The Tax Situation

Rental income is just income so far as the IRS is concerned and must be reported on Schedule E and (in 1986) on line 18 of Form 1040. Does this mean that some of the tax advantages of going on sabbatical discussed in the previous chapter (such as the deduction of what you pay in rent while away) are vitiated by the additional taxes you will have to pay on your rental income? Not quite. Here are the points to keep in mind:

1. What you must pay taxes on is the **net** rental income, that is the income minus costs. These costs include:
   - **taxes and mortgage interest payments** — but there is no saving here for the mortgage interest because deducting it from your rent income means that you can't deduct it on Schedule A so this is just a wash; moreover, you don't have much choice here; if you deduct **any** costs, then you must deduct interest and taxes first.
   - **depreciation** — this can be a major deduction; if, for example, you use straight line, 15-year depreciation on your house, as you are allowed to do, this can be a very considerable deduction (7% of the purchase price of your house plus the cost of improvements or the market value of the house, whichever is lower); still, it's not as good as it sounds because, if you sell your house, then previous depreciation becomes a capital gain on which you must pay taxes and these are taxes you can't postpone as you can normal capital gains on a house by buying another, more expensive house; (not knowing about this, we recall the blow when we had to pay such capital gains taxes some years ago; we recall the similar blow when we also had to pay capital gains on that portion of our house on which we had taken a deduction for a personal office because that made it **business property** to which the postponement of capital gains if you buy a more expensive house does not apply. For a way to handle this, see TGCT, p. 43); in addition to your house, you can also depreciate your furniture and this will have no later tax consequences unless you sell the furniture. All in all it is worth studying the pros and cons of depreciation carefully (see TGCT, pp. 44-58).
   - **maintenance** — that is, all your costs for keeping the house in good running order for your tenants; this is a key point because it means that you may do major maintenance to your house while

it is rented and deduct the cost of this from your rental income; the tax savings from this can be considerable.
— other costs such as insurance, advertising and legal fees.

2. All these deductions mean that, far from having any net rental income, you will almost certainly have a sizable loss on your house rental since it is unlikely that your rental income will cover even your mortgage interest and tax payments. On all three of our sabbaticals the net losses have been quite considerable even when we didn't take depreciation so as not to have to pay capital gains later. A loss will subtract from the rest of your income just like itemized deductions. Yes, but. The "but" is that the IRS does not allow you to take a loss on rental property unless it is rented for a full calendar year. We discovered this only about a month before leaving on sabbatical in 1971 when the lease our tenants had signed was for an 11 1/2 month period. We then luckily were able to persuade the tenants that they really wanted to rent the house for an extra two weeks so that they then signed a new lease for a full year.

3. There's one further problem here. In order to take a loss on a house, the IRS must be convinced that your intent in renting it is to realize a gain. But how can you do this if, as we've said above, it's almost certain that the rent you charge won't cover mortgage interest and real estate taxes to say nothing of depreciation and maintenance? The answer given in TGCT is that, in times of generally increasing real estate values, the increase in value of your house over a year is likely to mean a net gain for you even though you don't have to declare this gain until you sell the house. Which is to say that you will be better off by renting than you would be if you sold the house when you went on sabbatical. In our case we took considerable losses for our house rental on our 1971, 1972, 1978 and 1979 returns and these were never questioned. (It's too early yet to tell what will happen with out 1985 and 1986 returns on which we also reported rental losses.)

Our conclusion from the above is that, although the rental income is taxable, much of the cost to you of this tax can be saved if you do maintenance on the house (which you may have been putting off for years) while your house is rented. And, if you also depreciate your house while it is rented, there may be no net cost at all (in the year you rent your house) for the rental income.

The following calculation illustrates the above:

House rented from 1 September 1986 to 31 August 1987 at $600/month; 1986 income	$2400.00
1986 mortgage interest (September through December)	1628.12
1986 real estate taxes (4/12)	756.25

Depreciation (4/12 x .05 x 90,000)	1500.00
Maintenance (new roof, replacing washing machine, other minor repairs)	2450.00
Insurance (4/12), advertising, legal fees	200.00
Loss for 1986	$4134.37

Since 1987 would encompass 8 of the 12 months of rental, the loss would be correspondingly larger.

How to Rent Your House

Before you can worry about finding the right tenants and trying to make sure that they will not destroy your house, you have to find **some** tenants. We have tried the following techniques:

1. Distributing a notice as widely as possible around the university since, of course, almost every college or university has a considerable number of transients each year. A copy of the notice we used for our 1985-86 sabbatical is as follows:

> **House for Rent**
>
> For one year (or 13 months) from 1 July 1985 while faculty member is on sabbatical; 4 bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, sun porch, deck, 2-car garage, small (about 30 x 50) back yard; fully furnished; contains all appliances including microwave; on quiet street downtown near the art gallery and Buffalo State College; convenient to all Buffalo private schools; public schools nearby; $600/month plus utilities; contact Anthony Ralston (Office: X3186; Home: 876-8469)

Only for 1985-86 was this the technique which actually brought us our tenants although it did at least bring some inquiries each time. In 1985 our notice went to an office in one of the medical school departments from whence it was sent to a doctor and his family who were coming to Buffalo for two years and who then rented the house by phone, sight unseen. (More on that below).

Since notices like this often find their way quickly into the department head's circular file, keep an eye on the weekly university newspaper, if there is one, for announcements about new faculty or visitors and then send the notice again to the appropriate department or get the address of the newcomer and send the notice directly.

2. Sending a similar notice to large firms in the area, hospitals, sports teams, private schools etc. This sounds like a good idea because one would seem to tap a lot of transient population this way. However, the only inquiries we have ever had from this source came in the month or so before we left and after the house had already been rented.

3. Generally spread the word around through friends, acquaintances etc. This is easy and painless. It has led to inquiries although never to an actual rental for us.

4. Advertising in the newspaper. Although, as noted below, we have always left this until fairly late, it has been the method that worked two out of three times. Often someone knowing that he or she is going to move or be transferred gets the paper in the new location for just the purpose of looking for a house. This is what happened once with us. The other time someone already renting in Buffalo but needing a house for the next year saw our ad.

5. Using a real estate agent. This is usually a last minute technique since agents seldom deal with rentals much before the actual date the house is wanted. We've had inquiries from agents to whom we sent our notice but always only after we had rented the house.

When should you start trying to rent? We have circulated the notice around the university in late February or early March at about the time that departments might be starting to have information about new and visiting faculty for the next year and we've spread the word to friends and acquaintances at the same time (steps 1 and 3 above). We've also sent the letter to local businesses at about this time, but probably it would be better to do this about two months before you want to rent your house. Companies almost never know about new employees three or four months ahead of time.

We have also sent our notice to real estate agents in February or March but that is probably too early also. Sixty days or even only thirty days before you want to rent your house is probably better.

Perhaps the crucial question is when to start advertising. (Where to advertise is much easier. Just use the main newspaper or newspapers in your area.) If you still haven't rented your house and its only two months before you intend to leave, nervous times are at hand since, if by some disaster you don't rent your house, it may be impossible for you to go away on sabbatical. We think that two months before you want to rent is the right time to advertise. A typical advertisement might look like this:

> [Name of town or area]; furnished; 4 bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, 2-car garage, deck, family room; 1/4 acre lot; available 1 July for 12 or 13 months; $600/month plus utilities.

Note the "12 or 13 months". Such flexibility may be useful to you and to prospective tenants. Note also the "plus utilities". Most people would assume this even if it weren't there but it may help avoid misunderstandings. We've just advertised on weekends at the start. (Many newspapers have a good 2 or 3-day weekend rate.)

A really important point is this. If it gets to be less than thirty days

before you want to go and the house still isn't rented, don't hesitate to lower the rent. Both because of the tax advantages discussed above and because you probably don't want to leave your house empty in any case, getting the house rented is much more important than getting the last ounce of rent out of your tenants.

Choosing Tenants

Maybe you'll be lucky and have people beating down your door to rent your house. ("People" means anything more than one prospect!) How do you choose between prospective tenants? Indeed, can you choose at all, given that you almost never would have more than one offer at one time? Our experiences may be useful.

In response to a notice about our house that we had circulated around the University, we were, in the Spring of 1978, visited by a group of graduate students who thought that our house would make a nice menage six or menage sept. When they had departed one of us (guess which!) almost had a heart attack at the thought of what would happen to the house under such auspices. But you can't refuse to rent to students because they're unattractive or just because too many years as a college professor has given you a jaundiced view of students in general. But what you can do is require terms in a lease which will either protect you sufficiently or make it unlikely that your house will still seem attractive to tenants you really don't want. In the case of the students we said we would have to have six months rent as security (and that this would **not** be applicable to the last six months rent — more on that below). And we said there would have to be guarantee for the rent in writing from the parents of one of the students. In the event, the students lost interest in our house, whether because of our conditions or otherwise, we don't know.

In the spring of 1985, just at the time we were in final negotiations with the people who actually rented the house, we were visited by a decidedly scruffy young man and his wife who were expecting their first child. He was in some strange business connected with refurbishing old Cadillacs and similar cars and then peddling them. On the spot they agreed to rent the house at the rent we had asked. We put them off on the grounds that we were already negotiating with someone else. What would we have done otherwise since we certainly didn't want to rent to these people? Not clear. Probably we would again have tried to set conditions in the lease that they would not have agreed to. But this is a tricky business because many places quite rightly have laws barring discrimination in housing. We've never investigated the legal situation with house rentals. Our advice, however, is to be very careful that you don't do anything that might leave you open to a suit. On the other hand, we should note an opinion that, unless you discriminate quite flagrantly, legal problems with prospective tenants are most

unlikely.

We have, by the way, always gotten at least two references on prospective tenants. These are of only modest value because, of course, just about any family can get two friends, relatives or colleagues to write a reference saying they are the most reliable people in the universe. But they do give you some sense of security if the references come from reliable sounding people.

A final piece of advice is to try not to rent your house to someone who has not seen it or, at least, has not had it seen by a friend or colleague. When we rented our house in 1985-86 to a doctor and his family coming to the Medical School from Puerto Rico, it was impractical for them to see the house before renting it. But we did insist that a colleague from the department in the Medical School, where he was going to be, come and look at the house and report back to the tenant. It just seems to us a good idea that any tenant have a clearly unbiased opinion about the house if the tenant cannot see the house beforehand.

Showing Your House

Showing a house to be rented is essentially the same as showing it when you are trying to sell it. As in the latter case, it is useful to have a list of utility bills for the past year to show prospective tenants.

The Lease

We strongly recommend that you have your tenants sign a standard lease no matter how well recommended they come. Your house is just too important to rely on informal procedures no matter how well recommended or known to you the tenants are. Unfortunately, it is true that, even if your tenants are a visiting faculty family, this is no guarantee against disaster. The percentage of irresponsible deadbeats among university faculty is probably about the same as in the population at large.

You can get a standard lease form from just about any real estate agent or lawyer. The main things to be careful about with it are:

1. Make sure that whatever arrangements you have made for payment of utilities in addition to the rent are explicitly stated. The lease form will usually have an appropriate clause for this but make sure it reads the way you want.

2. The lease form will probably also have a place to fill in the security deposit which the tenant is to pay upon **signing** the lease. We have always asked for — and received without question — a deposit equal to two months rent. Usually **not** in the lease and, therefore, something we have always added is a clause that the deposit is **not** applicable to the last two months rent. If you don't do this, most people will just not pay the rent the last two months. Since you normal-

ly won't be able to inspect the house for damage until after the tenants have left, this would mean that the deposit was essentially worthless except as a hedge against non-payment of the rent at all.

We are not quite so naive as to think that a clause in the lease barring the use of the deposit for the last two months rent will necessarily mean that it won't be used for that anyway. And, after all, what can you do if it is? By the time you know what is happening, it's probably too late and too much trouble to try to evict the tenants. But we still do retain — despite all evidence to the contrary — a naive belief in the moral suasion of such a clause in the lease. Almost everyone will take such a clause at face value and not apply the deposit to the last two month's rent.

In our experience no tenant has ever tried to use the deposit to pay the last two month's rent. And, happily, the amount of the deposit has always more than covered the damage done which could not be ascribed to normal wear and tear. For the first time in our experience, after our most recent sabbatical our tenants, who had four children aged 12 and under, did not admit that had done any damage whatever and wanted their entire deposit back. We estimated the damage at $800. Although they threatened legal action, as of this writing it looks like that will come to nothing. It's important to have given the tenants a complete inventory (see below) and to get bills for all repairs of damage as well as to keep mementos of the damage such as torn lamp shades. This is a case where possession (of the deposit) really is nine-tenths of the law. Unless you are being completely unreasonable, it will almost never be worth it to a tenant to dispute your damage assessment.

We have always put the tenant's deposit in a savings account set up for just that purpose and have returned it plus interest (and less damages) to the tenant.

By the way, don't stop trying to rent your house until you have a signed lease in hand with the security deposit. Keep showing the house even after someone has agreed to terms but has yet to sign the lease and send a deposit. Of course, you must tell anyone who sees the house during this time that you think it is already rented.

Preparing Your House for Tenants

Hooray! The lease is signed. The security is in the bank. All you have to do is leave. What should you leave for your tenants' use and what can you reasonably put away in a place to which they don't have access? Here is our advice:

1. Set aside a room in which to store things which your tenants will not have access to. If this is impossible, at least set aside some area in the basement or attic in which you will store things and which will be off-limits to your tenants. And make sure there is a clause

in the lease which specifies what this space is and that it is **not** included in the premises being let.

2. What should you store in this space? Well, obviously, anything so precious that you wouldn't want to take a chance on having it lost or broken even if your security would cover it. The kinds of things we've stored include:
   — our home computer
   — antique (and fragile) chairs
   — good china, glassware and silverware
   — clothes we didn't want to take with us
   — breakable bric-a-brac
3. From a different viewpoint, what must you leave even if you're worried about what might happen to it? A general precept is that the house should be left generally as it was when the tenants saw it first unless at that time you specifically indicated that some things were excluded from the rental. Thus, it is not fair to put your good sofa in storage and replace it with an old beat up one from the cellar unless you said at the time the house was being seen that this was what you were going to do (which wouldn't, of course, improve the probability of renting). When we rented our house most recently, we thought about putting a new microwave oven away but decided that, since it had been in full view when we rented the house and since we hadn't mentioned it at the time, it had to be left for the tenants' use.

Thus, you must leave such things as:

— every day china, glassware, silverware, utensils etc.
— bed linen, blankets, towels etc. — it would be unusual to store away much in this category
— furniture — whatever was in view when you showed the house except things excluded at that time or in the lease (but the former is preferable) — remember that almost no one will take as good care of your furniture as you do so exclude anything of real (or sentimental) value
— appliances — make sure you leave good operating instructions for all appliances more complicated than a toaster; it's amazing how unsophisticated people can be about such things; before leaving in 1985, we bought a new dryer which "broke" three months after our tenants moved in because they had never emptied the lint trap.

A complete inventory of your house should be a part of the lease. This is in part a hedge against disagreements when you return due as much as anything to faulty memory. The inventory should include the general status of all pieces of furniture (scratches, other evidence of wear or imperfection) which can be used when you return as a standard against which to measure damage.

We think it is important to leave a house as clean and neat as you can for the tenants. This may not be so easy because the process of leaving for six months or a year is not a peaceful one, conducive to tidiness. But not only is it just being nice to people who are probably as harassed in coming as you are in leaving, it also provides another form of moral suasion on people to return the house to you in more or less the same state in which they found it. Although there is certainly no reason to leave a stocked refrigerator, freezer or liquor cabinet, it is probably not wise to leave everything absolutely empty. Some milk in the refrigerator, a few miscellaneous things in the freezer, some soap for the dishwasher and washing machine and a 2/3 empty bottle of gin or brandy will make a house seem more inviting than a totally pristine landscape.

Miscellaneous

Here are a few items which didn't fit into any of the categories above:

1. Make sure your homeowners insurance is properly in force. In response to an almost perfunctory query to our insurance agent shortly before leaving in 1985, we were surprised — shocked? — to find that our homeowners policy not only didn't cover the house when it was rented but specifically excluded coverage during any period of tenancy. On previous sabbaticals the policies in force had covered such periods. We even found that it was difficult to find a company which would write a policy covering the period we were away. Perhaps this is because there have been a lot of problems with house rentals in the recent past. In any case, our agent finally got us a policy to cover the period we were away but only after some arm-twisting by him on a company with whom he does a lot of business. So this is something you surely want to check.
2. Make sure also that your appliance service contracts are in force and that the renewals will be properly taken care of.
3. We have always stopped all periodic services — gas, electricity, telephone, cable TV, newspapers, magazines — before we left. It could be argued that some of these (e.g. utilities, telephone) are just as easily kept in your name with the understanding that tenants will pay the bills. We have just thought it cleaner to have all services switched over to the tenants. (Of course, in some instances like cable TV and newspapers, they may not want these at all or may want different services than you had.) For gas and electricity we have always arranged things so that there was no gap in service at all. For the telephone, we have cut off service and let the tenants reapply since that normally takes no more than a day or so. You may, however, want to get back your old number when you return. If you

just cut off service, this is usually not possible. But New York Telephone and, we suppose, other companies have a service such that, for at most a nominal charge, they will save your number for you while you are away.

4. Leave your tenants a carefully put together set of notes which describes such things as how the appliances work or where the directions are, what to do if repairs are needed, how to handle such things as garbage, taking care of the lawn and winterizing the house, what to do about mail for you which the post office didn't forward, any idiosyncrasies of your house and anything else you can think of which might be useful to them.

5. Obviously things can go wrong while you're away which may or may not be the fault of the tenants. You may wish to tell the tenants that they should just go ahead and get done any appliance or house repair under, say, $50 (the lease will make you responsible for such repairs which are not due to negligence on the part of the tenants). But what if something major goes wrong? You won't want to give the tenants carte blanche to get a new roof if yours blows off. Of course, you'll give the tenants a way of getting in touch with you. But sometimes emergencies won't wait until you get back from a trip or even from a weekend away. What then? One possibility is to empower a close friend to make decisions which can't wait for you to be available. In principle, this sounds fine but it does put a lot of potential stress on a friendship. Would you like to be in this position yourself? A close relative is probably a better choice if one is available. We don't advise against this solution but we think the one we used on our most recent sabbatical is preferable if you can manage it. This is to get someone like a secretary or administrative assistant to act as your "agent" while you are away. Your agent would then act as, in effect, your employee in dealing with the tenants. Of course, the agent would be instructed to contact you before making any major decision but would be empowered to make such decisions in emergencies. If you have someone who is competent and who you trust, this can be a very satisfactory solution as it was for us during our most recent sabbatical. If you pay the agent the equivalent of what he or she normally earns per hour, the cost should be fairly nominal (barring earthquake, fire, tornado etc.)

An agent can be particularly useful as a source of just question-answering for your tenants, something to which you might not wish to subject a friend or relative. For example, our recent tenants from Puerto Rico didn't know anything about thermostats. (It must be nice to live in an always warm climate!) Since ours is one of those fancy jobs with separate day and night settings, they couldn't figure out how to use it. Enter our agent who went to the house to show them.

(It helps, by the way, if, as with our agent, her husband knows how to fix anything and could, therefore, repair leaks, broken windows etc. at any time!)

6. When you return from sabbatical, you should be prompt about returning the security. But you don't have to be immediate. Check the house carefully for missing or damaged items. If the amount to be assessed against the security is relatively trivial, subtract it and send an accounting to your tenants. If the amount is not trivial (say, greater than $100), it might be best to come to an agreement before you return the balance of the security.

7. Suppose you decide not to rent your house or fail to find tenants but decide to go on sabbatical anyhow. One thing which we have seen colleagues do (particularly if they were only going away for one semester) is to find some friend or relative or trusted student to "house sit" rent free but perhaps not utility free. This, at least, means that your house won't sit there empty, prey to thieves, vandals and broken water or gas pipes. If you do leave your house empty, at least try to find someone who will make periodic visits, particularly at times of violent weather. And make sure your homeowners insurance is in force!

Horror Stories

We suppose that for the next edition of this book we shall have a considerable selection of such stories to choose from which readers of this edition will send us. For the present we will content ourselves with just two examples of what can go wrong with a house rental. For things **can** go wrong. We think the probability of really serious problems is quite small and should not deter you from renting your house. But forewarned is . . .

On our second sabbatical we rented our house to what seemed a very nice Canadian couple with two children. The husband was a sales representative for a Canadian firm who had already spent one year in Buffalo and expected to spend a couple more. They had excellent references from solid, local citizens. Indeed, they were very good tenants. The house was in quite clean and good shape when we returned. The total damage came to about $300 which was easily covered by the security and there was no problem in getting the tenants to agree on the amount to be deducted from the security. In fact, they were such good tenants that we highly recommended them to a colleague who was going on sabbatical the year we returned and who did rent his house to them. The result was a near disaster. When the colleague and his family returned, their house was almost literally a shambles with the contents of tool chests and drawers all over the floor, paint and wallpaper ruined and lots of other things. The damage ran close to $5000

to fix and was, of course, not covered by security. And the tenants had left for Canada where they could not be located. (We hasten to add that we think that Canadians are generally the nicest people in the world but there are rotten apples everywhere.)

One lesson from this which is easily learned but hard to use is that it is a real advantage to rent to someone who is coming to your area or university for longer than the year you are away. Not only will your tenants then be available when you return but they are much more likely to take good care of your house if they are going to be trying to rent another house the next year. Moreover, if your tenant is a visiting faculty member and you are a fairly senior faculty member, the last thing the visitor will want is to be on bad terms with you during the year you return from sabbatical.

Another lesson from the above might be not to rent to a salesmen but rather to a fellow academic. We are not so prejudiced to think this is a useful lesson. As noted above, we do not believe that probity and decency are more highly developed qualities in academics than in the population at large. Indeed, we know of a colleague who rented a house to visiting academics in the belief that, at the least, they would do their best to keep the house in reasonable order. In fact, however, they returned to something nearly equivalent to a pigsty with — to give just one example — food stuck to various walls. Our original thought is that there just are no sure things.

This is the longest chapter in this book. Not surprising. Your house is so important to your life that getting it right when you rent it is crucial to your enjoyment of a sabbatical. We hope we've left the impression that, with care and only a little bit of luck, renting your house can go smoothly and successfully.

Chapter 5

Renting a Place to Live

Second only in trauma to renting your own house is finding a place to live while you are away. Although this is much more straightforward than renting your house, finding the right place to live for you and your family is crucial to making a sabbatical the good experience it should be.

House or Apartment?

This is more likely to be determined by where you are going and the size of your family than by your own desires. We rented a house once when we had four children with us and apartments twice, once when we had two children and once when we had none with us. In the U.S., if you are going anywhere except into a big city and you have children with you, most people will want to go from a house to a house.

Costs

If you're going from a relatively depressed real estate market, such as that where we live in Buffalo, to a high cost one (like London) the cost of renting may be a shock if you're not very knowledgeable about such things. This effect is probably exaggerated by the fact that, in a depressed area, rentals are likely to be — relatively — even lower than house purchase prices because people renting a house or apartment — like you — often have to get it rented quickly and, therefore, will accept less than the real value. Conversely, rentals in high cost areas are often relatively higher than house prices because demand is high and people who want to rent — like you — often need something in a hurry.

One thing that works in your favor is the tax advantages discussed in Chapter 3. Since most or all of your rental cost (and the associated cost of utilities) is tax deductible, the real cost of the rental will be considerably less than what you actually pay. Of course, against this gain you must offset the taxes you must pay on the income you receive for renting your house. But since, as discussed in Chapter 3, some or much of this can be offset against maintenance or depreciation costs, you will tend to gain on the tax deduction much more than you lose on the additional taxes you will incur.

From our experience it is very important to calculate what you can afford to pay in rental taking into account the **net** cost after the tax deduction. As we noted earlier, if we had been figuring on the basis of absolute cost, we never would have considered the house we rented in London in 1971.

A word about utilities. It's a good idea to get good data from pro-

spective landlords about the actual costs. If you are going from one place in the U.S. to another, then the crucial utility will be the one used for heat (although if you are so unlucky as to move to the New York metropolitan area where you will fall into the clutches of Consolidated Edison, the cost of electricity will probably be much higher than where you came from even if it isn't used for heat). We have been impressed about how naive people who live in warm climates can be about the cost of heating a house in a climate like that of Buffalo which isn't even very cold compared to many places in the Midwest.

If you are lucky, you will be going from a high cost area to a low cost one. Even so, for the reasons above, you will probably make less of a killing than you may expect by renting high to someone and renting low yourself. Our advice is to plan on living just as well where you go as you are used to even if this requires some modest increase in (net) cost. Otherwise dissatisfaction on the part of you, your spouse or your children in their living arrangements will detract considerably from your enjoyment of your sabbatical.

How to Go About Renting a House

Your own experience in renting your house to others will give you a lot of insight into how to go about renting a place for your family. Perhaps the crucial question is: Can you risk renting a place sight unseen if you can't arrange a trip to your sabbatical location before your actual move there?

Before answering that, we'll tell you our experience. In 1971, although one of us had been to London some months before we moved there and had "cased the joint", we had made no contacts whatever about a place to live before we left. One of us went two weeks before the other just for the purpose of looking for a place to live. But, in fact, except for renting a house temporarily for three weeks, nothing had been found when the rest of the family arrived although a considerable amount has been learned about estate agents (English English for "real estate agents") and likely places to live. Within just a few days we then did find and rent the house we lived in that year. One lesson in this is that, when you go to a vast metropolitan area like London, the total selection of housing at any time will be so great that you need not worry about finding a place. Another is that, when there are many possible choices of location in which to live, all of which are more or less equally convenient to the sabbatical institution, it is useful to spend some time just learning the geography so that you can make an informed choice among various possible houses or apartments. Included in this is the convenience of schools for children (see the next chapter), shopping and public transportation.

Several months before leaving on our 1978-79 sabbatical we heard about a flat (apartment) in London which was owned by a professor

at our university and which was currently rented to another professor at our university then on sabbatical in London. When one of us was in London a couple of months before we moved there, arrangements were made to see the flat. It looked pretty good to the one of us who saw it and it was in an excellent location for the school to which we were planning to send the two children who were accompanying us. So we rented it and had a place to go to when we arrived in London for the sabbatical.

This was the least successful of our three rentals in London. It wasn't bad; it just wasn't very good. The furniture and decor were a bit grubby and, as spoiled Americans, we found sharing one bathroom among four people an inconvenience. The lesson we draw is an inevitably sexist one: When the husband sees the place to be rented and the wife only has it described to her, the probability of error is considerable, probably much greater than vice versa.

For our most recent sabbatical we knew pretty much where we wanted to live in London and we had been in touch with some estate agents before we left. In just three days in London before leaving for a seven week trip, we found a flat which, while sensationally expensive, was also sensationally successful. One lesson here is that, if you know the area you are moving to, it helps a lot. Another is that, if you have decided to splurge, it's much easier to find something you'll like.

In addition to the lessons above, the following may be pertinent:

1. People often try to exchange dwellings when they go on sabbatical with someone coming to their institution or area. This may work out fine when you can do it but, unless you are going **from** a big metropolitan area **to** a big metropolitan area, you will have to be quite lucky for this to work. (Lots of people like us go to London but how many come from London to Buffalo?) Also, particularly if you are going to a foreign country, you should realize that standards of housing in other countries can be very different from those in the U.S.

2. You should try to get some help in locating housing from the colleague who has invited you or, at least, if such exists, from the housing office at the institution to which you are going. Although this has never proved productive for us, it should be a good way of locating a place when you are going to a mainly university town or even larger places. The kind of notice which we circulated to all departments at our university should be a good source of possible places to live for you.

3. You could try advertising in the newspaper of the location to which you are going. Most papers have "Houses (or apartments) wanted for rent" columns in their classified sections. We have no experience with this but it sounds like a fairly cheap way to scout the territory.

At least you should have a look at a few issues of the local newspaper so that you get some idea of prices before you actually start looking for housing.

4. We have found it helpful to deal with at least two real estate agents. A particular agent may specialize in certain kinds of houses or apartments which are not right for you. And seeing possibilities through different sets of eyes often gives you valuable added perspective on a strange place.

Our advice is not to rent sight unseen if you can possibly help it. If you can't help it, at least try to have a colleague or friend see the place for you. It's not that things can't work out well even if you haven't seen the place you are renting and no one you know has either. It's just that the potential for disaster is much greater when you rent blind.

Questions to Ask

If you've never rented a furnished house or apartment before, you may not know what questions to ask about the place you are renting when you see it or, particularly, if you have to rent without seeing it. Some of these questions are the same ones you would ask if you were buying a house — cost of utilities, nearness of schools, shopping, public transportation etc. But some others are pertinent only to furnished rentals:

- Is all the furniture you see what will be in the house when you take up occupancy? If not, you should know just which pieces will "disappear".
- What appliances are included with the rental? Will there be directions for the use of each one? (This is particularly important in a foreign country where the appliances may do whatever they are supposed to do quite differently than their American counterparts.) How are repairs to be handled? Should you just have things fixed and deduct the cost from the rent or are you supposed to get permission before having a repair made?
- What dishes, silverware, utensils etc. will be in the kitchen? You must expect that good china, glassware and silver will not be included but every day things should remain.
- What towels and linen will be supplied? Usually furnished rentals include enough of both but occasionally they are not included.
- What kind of lease will the landlord want? For what period with what security? Any unusual clauses such as making you liable for the costs of cleaning rugs and curtains or painting when you leave?
- Will all rooms in the house or apartment be available for your use or will the owners want to reserve one as a storeroom?
- Are there any pets and, if so, is it intended that they should remain? If the answer to both parts is yes, who will bear the cost of food,

vets etc.?

- Does the rent include utility costs (probably not) and will you be responsible for any property taxes (the answer should be no)? If utility costs are to be paid by you, which ones? Just gas and electricity, or water, too?
- How will the telephone be handled? Just transferred to you or will you have to apply for your own number?
- How will taking care of the lawn and shrubbery be handled? If you will be responsible, what tools will be provided?
- If you're moving to a snowy climate, is there some provision for ploughing the driveway or, at least, a snow blower?
- In general, how are you supposed to get problems or emergencies handled?

Some of the questions above can, at least in theory, be asked after you have signed the lease but before you move in. If you are dealing with what seem like reasonable people — rather than with a real estate agent — then an informal, friendly approach may be warranted. But if you are at all concerned that you might get an answer to any of these questions which would seriously upset you, ask early to avoid unhappiness later.

Chapter 6
Schools for Your Children

When we went on our first sabbatical, we had all four of our children with us. Since the youngest was not quite four, she was only nursery school fodder and we anticipated no great problem finding a suitable one. But for the other three, aged then 8, 11 and 12, we were very concerned about finding schools that would be "right" for them. In retrospect, we think we were too concerned about this in some ways, too little in others. In this chapter we'll describe our experiences and what we learned from them as well as discussing questions about schooling which we have never had to face.

Language Problems

England and the United States are, as Winston Churchill said, two countries separated by a common language. We have now lived in Britain for four separate years so that, when a British friend gives us a quizzical look when using a word which has a different meaning in the U.S. or which is just different from the American word for the same thing, we are quick to point out that we speak both languages. All of which is just a prelude to the obvious: Language is one thing you don't have to worry about when looking for schools for your children when you take a sabbatical in Britain (or even in the U.S.!). But many people take sabbaticals in countries where English is not the language. What then? As noted earlier in this book, we have considered sabbaticals in non-English speaking countries. One reason we have never actually taken such a sabbatical is because we have been too lazy or too chicken ourselves to learn another language well enough to get along happily for a year in such a country. If you, however, have overcome these inhibitions, then we think you should probably not worry too much about having to put your children into "native" schools. It is clear that children, particularly pre-secondary school children, will learn another language quickly and happily much easier than you will. This is, of course, not the only consideration. Even if the time to adapt to a new language is only a few weeks, these can be very painful for a child. And, in any case, social adaptation may be much more difficult than language adaptation. If this is a problem which is a real concern, then there are in most places in the world English language schools which you can consider and which we discuss later in this chapter. Anyhow because the advantages to children in learning another language and culture are so great, we don't think you should refuse to consider taking a sabbatical in a country where English is not the language because you are worried about your children's schooling.

Public or Private Schools?

Of course, financial considerations may rule out private schools. But, if not, what are the pros and cons? Before our first sabbatical in London we investigated two of the most famous English public (i.e. which means "private" in that other language) day (i.e. as opposed to "boarding") schools in London, St. Paul's and Westminster, for our two eldest children. This was really pure swank on our part since we couldn't have afforded them anyhow. In any case, we discovered that there was no way they could gain entry to either school at the late date to which we had left it. So we dropped the idea of private schools at all and, after we had found the house we rented, entered all three of our school age children (all boys) into state (i.e. public) schools run by the Inner London Education Authority. We did not, by the way, worry much about schools when choosing a house to rent. We assumed, not quite correctly, that, if the house we rented was in a good neighborhood, then the schools would likely be correspondingly good. Although one of us was brought up in Manhattan and should have known better, too many years of life in upper middle class white suburban America had dulled our critical faculties.

Problems in schools in inner London in 1971-72 were quite different than in American inner cities at the same time. (By 1986 the differences had been considerably narrowed; British inner city schooling problems had almost caught up with the U.S.) Still, if there were no segregated or ghetto schools as such, inner London schools were a far cry from those in American suburbia. (**Inner** London refers, roughly to the eleven most central boroughs of London, those within about a five mile radius of Big Ben. London is such a vast city physically — probably the largest in the developed world except perhaps for Los Angeles — that **outer** London comprises much more area than inner London. Schools in inner London fall under the aegis of ILEA, the Inner London Education Authority.)The junior school (second through fifth grade) to which we sent our 8-year old (he would have been in third grade in the U.S.) was a school with a fairly homogeneous student body, almost all from the nearby neighborhood. Our son had a quite good and happy year there. How much he learned isn't clear but that is more because it's not clear to us whether you are supposed to learn anything very important or useful in the third grade than it is because of any deficiency there might have been in the school. In any case, he had not the slightest trouble adjusting to fourth grade the next year in the U.S.

The large comprehensive school to which we sent our two elder boys was quite a different story. Comprehensive schools were first established in Britain in the 60s as the Labour government's way to get rid of some of the elitism of the school system whereby children of middle class families went to grammar schools and thence to universities while children of working class families went to more vocational

state schools and thence almost never to a university. (Children of upper class families almost all went — and still go — to private day or boarding schools.) Comprehensives were an amalgamation of these two kinds of schools (although grammar schools were only quite slowly phased out and some still exist). Comprehensives cover the seven grades which encompass junior high and high school in the U.S.

The comprehensive to which we sent our two eldest boys was a large (over 1000 students) school which sprawled over a number of mostly rather ancient (and ugly) buildings just off a main street. It was about three-quarters of a mile from where we lived and, thus, easy walking distance for the boys. It drew its student body from a fairly large area which, in addition to the neighborhood in which we lived, included two London areas known as Camden Town and Kentish Town, both of which have large recent immigrant populations, mainly at that time from Cyprus, Pakistan and India although there were many other nationalities at the school. All of which is to indicate not just that the student body was almost as sharp a contrast as you could imagine with the schools the boys had been used to but also that, because of language and related difficulties on the part of many of the students, there was not a lot of intellectual challenge for our sons. Nonetheless, we think it was an excellent year for them in terms of non-classroom learning — social adaptation (more on that below), perceptions of cultures other than their own etc. In the classroom they were kept reasonably busy but, we think, learned little they had not known already. Did that prove a disadvantage the next year back in the U.S. when one was in seventh and one in eighth grade? We think not. Indeed, in what seemed like no more than three weeks each boy had caught up with his class even though each had had little of the material which his classmates had been taught the previous year.

We must admit that this experience has profoundly affected our view of pre-college education for bright children who come from homes where education is stressed. Such children, if they were taught to read when they were five or six and never went to school another day until time for college, could probably catch up to their peers in about six months. The ability to learn in the late teen years just seems so great relative to the previous decade of life that little of the education in that decade really matters compared to what happens later. Of course, we exaggerate and, of course, there are subjects like foreign languages where the maximum ability to learn comes much earlier than for other subjects. And we repeat that our "theory" holds only for bright children from the kind of homes exemplified by most academic families. But, however much you may doubt our overall thesis, perhaps you will accept our conclusion that, for children in grades K to about 9, you should not worry too much about the strictly educational qualities of the schools you send them to while you are on sabbatical. It's important

that they should be happy in their schools and not bored but, whether or not they learn how to add fractions or take general science as their friends back home will, is just not important. There are important things to be learned by going to school in a foreign country or even in a different part of your own country but the most important of these will be learned outside the classroom.

Thus, we have no regrets about sending our boys to state schools in London during our 1971-72 sabbatical.

Still, in 1987-79, we sent both the children with us then to the American School in London, a private school and one like, we think, many American (and English) schools in countries around the world in that its curriculum is as like as possible the curriculum "back home". Why did we do this silly thing? It wasn't just — or really at all — that additional affluence meant we could afford the tuition (which was about $5000 for each child). The main and almost only reason was that our 15-year old was in tenth grade that year and would be taking his SATs the year after. We didn't want to put him at any disadvantage when he returned to the U.S. for his junior year. And just because it was convenient and in order not to do anything less for his sister than for him, we took the easy way out (except financially!) and sent our daughter to the American School also.

In retrospect, did we make the correct decision? Always hard to know about these kinds of things, of course. It seems very unlikely that it made any difference in how our son did on the SATs or where he went to college. He was bright enough so that he probably just didn't need whatever the American School gave him that an English state school would not have. On the other hand, the American School in London is an awfully good school and both children had a wonderful year there. This was the first time that any of our children had gone to private schools (before college). As great believers in public education, we had some qualms about sending them to any private school. Undoubtedly there are few private schools in the world with the facilities and quality of teachers that we found at the American School. Thus, perhaps we can be forgiven our very tender memories, indeed, of this particular private — and very elitist — school.

Local or International Schools

This question is, of course, only relevant when you are going abroad and it is also only relevant when you are willing to consider private schools since all (or almost all) international schools are private. Despite our very good experience with the American School in London, we think we would opt — other things being equal (i.e. no SATs the next year) — for local schools. The American School in London does have students with lots of nationalities besides American which is all to the good. But it **is** an **American** school in atmosphere and most of the students are

American. In a local private school the culture shock will inevitably be greater and such shocks are, we think, salutary for middle-class, suburban American youngsters.

Coping with Problems

Just because middle-class, suburban American children grow up in relatively bland, unstressful environments, there may be problems when they are plunked down in a foreign environment (even somewhere else in the U.S.!). Children are more adaptable than their parents but they are also subject to greater pressures than their parents.

The first day we sent our two eldest boys off to school in 1971 was one of the more traumatic of their lives. A couple of new American boys were ripe to be picked on by the assorted youth of the Haverstock school. One had his glasses grabbed (and later returned), his tie pulled (ties and jackets as part of a school uniform are compulsory at British schools) and was generally hazed. The other actually had his pen stolen while being threatened with a penknife. Both came home that day hating everything about England and wanting to go back to the U.S. on the first ship or plane. They were given the canonical speech about what a tough world it is and, however much we should try to settle our disputes peacefully, there comes a point where force must be met with force. The next morning they had the classical symptoms, one a headache, the other a stomach ache. Pitilessly both were sent out the door and off to school.

Since it is a law of nature that successful hazing and intimidation one day will surely lead to the same on subsequent days, they were immediately confronted again. But this time, armed with our exhortations and, more importantly, knowing that we must be correct, the perpetrator of the first repetition of tie-pulling was promptly clobbered by a newly aggressive 11-year old. (Actually, the aggression had always been very near the surface; the only surprise was that it hadn't appeared the previous day.) Together with a corresponding show of steadfastness from his brother, that was enough to stop the hazing and, so far as we know, there was none the rest of the year. They made friends and had a generally reasonable time at school although neither looks back on that school very fondly.

Whatever difficulties your children have had at home either with schoolwork or with behavior or with making friends etc., you should be prepared for the possibility of similar and perhaps more serious trouble when they begin a strange school. Particularly right at the start, some extra awareness and sensitivity are in order. Your own assessment of possible problems may well affect your choice of a school. But we don't think, except perhaps in quite rare cases, the possibilities of difficulties at school should lead you to choose a "safe" American location or a "safe" American school abroad in preference to a local school. Our ex-

perience is that rather few children from academic families learn very many adaptation skills as they grow up. There is always some pain involved in learning to adapt. One of the most important values of a sabbatical in an exotic place is the need it creates for children — and their parents — to learn such skills.

Chapter 7
Things to Do Before You Leave

It's probably clear to you by now that we believe that good organization and planning are crucial to a successful sabbatical. Nowhere is this more true than in the planning that must be done in the months and weeks just before you leave. We assume that the major problems are behind you — deciding where to go, renting your house etc. In this chapter we concentrate on the considerable number of last-minute things which must be done before you leave.

1. **Cancelling Services.** These include the ones we mentioned in Chapter 4 such as gas and electricity in your house (which would be transferred, not cancelled) and telephone. (This is the time when you should arrange to have your phone number saved for the time you are away as mentioned in Chapter 4.) But don't forget things like newspapers, gardeners, milk delivery etc., most or all of which you will want to leave your tenants information about.

2. **Mail.** If you fill out the appropriate card at the post office, your first class mail will be forwarded without charge for the whole year you are away (up to 18 months, actually) to any address in the U.S. which you specify. Magazines will be forwarded, too, if you agree to pay the extra postage for doing this. That's fine, but:
   - Who is the mail going to be forwarded to? You, of course, if you will be in the U.S. But, if you are going to be abroad, you'll need to find someone to take your mail. More on that below.
   - In our experience the post office does a good and conscientious job of forwarding mail. But to accomplish this, the postman or postwoman must intercept each piece of mail and affix to it a label with your forwarding address. Inevitably some are missed and delivered to your home. The ones missed may just as easily be life insurance bills as newsless letters from your cousin in Oshkosh. So you must make some arrangements with your tenants (if you have any) or with someone else to handle mail which slips through the post office's forwarding net. We have found it useful to leave a bunch of pre-addressed, large envelopes in the house for use by our tenants to forward mail once every couple of weeks or so.

   For things for which you don't want to risk the forwarding procedure (e.g. tax, credit card and insurance bills, credit card renewals, bank statements) you should just send a change of address to the company or bank or governmental office but try to do this four to six weeks before you want the new address to take effect.

Magazines and professional journals are a particular problem. You can, of course, just send changes of address when you go and reverse the process when you return but periodical publishers are notoriously inefficient about doing things like this on just the date you tell them to (because most haven't learned very well yet how to use computers). Except for magazines we are **very** attached to, our policy has just been to let subscriptions lapse in the year before we go on sabbatical. We have generally kept up our subscriptions to professional journals without changing the address, so that they have just piled up in the office, on the grounds that they would be available in the library at our sabbatical institution. Not as convenient as having them arrive on your doorstep but satisfactory in our experience.

3. **Who Pays the Bills?** Even if you go abroad you can arrange to have someone send you all your mail, particularly things like insurance bills, tax bills and notices of mortgage payments. One problem with this is that the initial forwarding by the post office, the second forwarding by some relative, friend or agent to some far off place and then the sending by you of payment from that far off place is likely to result in late payments with resultant charges and lots of inconvenience. On two of our sabbaticals a (retired) parent happily took care of receiving and paying all our bills. (Oh, yes, we provided the funds with which to do this!) On our most recent sabbatical our house agent also took care of our bills. But whatever you arrange, the mechanism needs to be put in place before you leave.

4. **Cars.** If you stay in the U.S., you presumably will just take your cars with you. But what should you do if you go abroad? We've done various things:
   - On our first sabbatical we just sold both our (rather elderly) cars before we left, one about a month before we left and the other in the last couple of weeks. We then bought a new car abroad (see next chapter) and brought it back with us and bought a second car when we returned from sabbatical. This is the logistically simplest solution but it may only be financially viable if you have planned your car purchases well for some years before you go on sabbatical.
   - On our second sabbatical we sold one of our cars but we were quite attached to the other (a Volvo wagon which was the car we had brought back from our first sabbatical). It seemed to have some good years left in it so we kept it. Since we were lucky enough to have a three-car garage, we arranged with our tenants to leave the car in the garage for the year. Although "experts" told us to put it up on blocks, we didn't. Also, if memory serves, it wasn't started more than a couple of times the entire year. Never-

theless, when we arrived home, while there were some low tires, there were no flat ones and the car started right up and off we went. Not bad after a Buffalo winter. And the car lasted for another five years before, sadly, dying just over a year before we left on our next sabbatical. Once again during this sabbatical we bought a car abroad and brought it back with us. If you do garage a car while you are away, don't forget to cancel the insurance when you go.

— On our most recent sabbatical we once again sold one car but gave the other (a venerable Rabbit — the car we had brought back from our second sabbatical) to a son who had just graduated from college. Again we bought a car abroad and brought it back with us and bought a second car when we returned.

A related point. Make sure that any driver's license renewal that comes due while you are away is forwarded to you. Your U.S. driver's license will be all you need almost anywhere in the world you go (see next chapter).

5. **Children Left Behind.** If you are going to be much further away than usual from not-quite-grown-up children, then some special arrangements may have to be made. Each of our last two sabbaticals have coincided with the first year in college for one of our children. One possibility might have been to have them start college in England. Not only did neither of them show much enthusiasm for this idea but also it would have been quite difficult because most English university programs are only three years long with students entering when they are one year older than in the U.S. Since we left on both sabbaticals early in the summer, it took considerable planning to arrange that each child would have something to do for the summer and then would get off to college properly. (We also admit to some qualms about whether we were doing our jobs as parents properly, sending these children off into the cruel world more or less by themselves. Anyhow we rationalized these feelings and neither child seems to have suffered.)

   Our son who was starting college in the fall of 1978 had a job in Buffalo for the summer and had a friend to stay with so the summer was fairly easy to arrange. Before we left he was fully outfitted with clothes etc. for college and he was provided with all the information (and money) he needed to get the bus from Buffalo to college in New Hampshire. Also we made arrangements to ship a trunk or two to college. All went off with no significant hitches. (His older brother, who was a sophomore in 1978-79, also had to be provided for. He, too, had a summer job and a place to stay and, with the sophistication of one year of college behind him, getting him off to college was relatively easy.)

The physical arrangements may be easier than psychological ones although it's probably parents not children who have the main psychological problems. They are likely to be more concerned about "deserting" children than the children are at being "deserted". Anyhow a visit early in the college year is a good idea if it can be arranged. In October of 1978 one of us, on a business trip back to the U.S., visited both boys in their respective colleges. We think this was much appreciated but not really necessary.

In 1985 our daughter was starting college. She spent part of the summer in Buffalo and the last part of it with us in Europe. Again we had done all the necessary shopping and had even delivered her trunks to college on the way from Buffalo to New York. (Most colleges won't accept trunks in July for the fall term but some will.) We put her on the plane from Lisbon to New York where she was met by a brother who, a couple of days later, drove her to college.

All of which says only that, although it takes considerable planning, not-quite-grown-up children can be more than adequately provided for if they must be left behind when you go on sabbatical. Really grown-up children are not a real problem. All three of our sons, one married, were in this category when we went away in 1985. One adjustment you might think you would have to make if you go abroad is to replace the regular phone contacts by letter writing assuming that neither you nor your children have forgotten how to write letters. But, perhaps alas, it is now very easy to use the telephone to and from abroad and it no longer is **that** expensive so that our contacts with our children in 1985-86 were mainly by phone.

5. **Parents Left Behind.** Going far away on sabbatical can be a problem and a worry if you will be much further away than usual from parents or other elderly relatives. On our first two sabbaticals the parents of one of us were moderately and then quite old. We stayed in regular touch by letter and saw them fairly often because one of us made fairly regular trips back to the U.S. The crucial point though was that we were just plain lucky that there was no serious — or even minor — illness either year. On our most recent sabbatical the parents of the other one of us were getting on. This was a concern, but a sister of one of us, close by, together with some trips back to the U.S. kept the problems under control for the year.

   Since few academics live that close to parents and relatives anyhow, going somewhat further away than usual on sabbatical is something you should be able to handle except perhaps in the case of known serious illness or generally poor health. The world is sufficiently small these days that it probably won't take all that much longer to get home from sabbatical than it normally would in case of emergency. It may, however, be quite a bit more expensive than

normal and you should be prepared for this. Otherwise our only — and obvious — advice is to stay in touch and keep your antennae poised to pick up incipient problems.

6. **Income Taxes.** Strictly speaking, this is not something you have to do anything about before you go away. But there are a couple of things you should know and may want to do something about before you leave. The only real problem is that, when 15 April rolls around and you are away on sabbatical, you may not have with you or, easily accessible back home, the records you need for your tax returns. As well, you may just not want to be bothered by mundane problems like income taxes! And you don't have to be. Surprisingly few people are aware that you can get an **automatic** extension on your federal taxes until 15 August just by filing Form 4868. (Most, perhaps all states provide a similar extension via a copy of Form 4868.) No, this doesn't mean that you can save by keeping the money yourself for four months instead of giving it to Uncle Sam or your state tax department. When you file Form 4868 on or before 15 April, you still must pay on what you estimate you will owe. If you underestimate by less than 10% of your total taxes, then there is no penalty but you will still have to pay interest for the period after 15 April at the going IRS rate which is currently (1986) 10%. If you're wrong by more than 10%, there may be a penalty, too. But usually it will be pretty easy to estimate your tax liability within 10% and just pay this in April. (Of course, if you are expecting refunds, you won't get these until after you file your returns. In case you hadn't guessed, neither the federal government nor any state government will pay you interest on the extra time it had your money.)

   We think the simplest thing to do is to just get Form 4868 at some point or arrange with your accountant to file it for you. Even if you go abroad, there is no need to get this form before you go unless you are going to some place like Antarctica because it is available from American embassies and consulates.

Chapter 8
Getting Settled

Getting settled in your sabbatical home is not really so different from getting settled when you make a permanent move. For most of the things you need to do, there isn't much difference between a year and forever. But, particularly if you're going abroad and, for a few things, even if you're not, there are some extra things to keep in mind for a sabbatical.

Money and Banking

If you take a sabbatical in the U.S., you'll almost certainly keep your old checking account as well as establishing a new one where you go. If your college or university will deposit your paycheck directly in your bank, then this would be a good time to take advantage of that even if you haven't done so previously. It's just very convenient to be able to count on knowing that these funds will be where you want them automatically every pay period.

You may want to continue to use your old checking account for paying such things as real estate taxes and credit card bills. You may also want to use it for deposit of your tenant's rent checks. But you'll certainly want a local account, too, for getting cash and paying local bills. If cash is going to get into your new account from checks you write on your old one, then, despite the wonders of computers and electronic funds transfer, remember that some banks still have archaic rules about how many days you must wait before you can draw on checks deposited. (Of course, the real purpose of these rules is no longer to protect the bank but rather to give it use of your money for a few days while you can't get at it.)

If you go abroad, you'll certainly want to open an account at a bank near where you live. Sometimes it will take longer before you can use the account (i.e. when you'll get your checkbook) or before you'll get your card for the cash machine than in the U.S. So have enough cash or traveler's checks to get you through a couple of weeks.

You may also want to open an account at the branch of your American bank (if there is one) or the branch of some American bank (again, if there is one) even though it is unlikely that there will be one near where you live. It may be more convenient — and cheaper — to transfer funds from the U.S. to a branch of an American bank than it will be to deposit dollars in the local bank where you have opened an account. On our most recent sabbatical in London we found it convenient to have an account at Citibank in London although our local bank was Lloyds, one of the big British banks (but not related to Lloyds of

London, the famous — and recently infamous — insurance company). All the dollars we transferred from the U.S. came to our Citibank account where they were converted to pounds. We then withdrew the pounds and deposited them in our account in Lloyds. Since we bank at Citibank in the U.S., we had our paychecks deposited in our U.S. bank. Then we were able to arrange the transfers to Citibank in London with minimum service charges and without the bank taking any cut on the conversion from dollars to pounds.

A related question, if you are going abroad, is whether you should send money ahead from the U.S. so that it will be waiting for you rather than just bringing a lot of traveler's checks (signed ones, of course, not blank a la Ollie North) with you. Although it's nice to have money waiting for you when you arrive, this really isn't much better than traveler's checks which can easily be converted to local currency. The real issue here is to get the best rate on the conversion of dollars to local currency. We suspect that none of our readers — even if they are economists — are much more expert than we are in predicting (guessing?) how the dollar will fluctuate in the period before the departure on sabbatical. Our recent experience in this respect should only be read as cautionary.

In the winter of 1984, a year and a half before we were to leave on sabbatical, we were already pretty sure we were going to spend it in London. After a business trip to Europe by one of us, we brilliantly decided that the dollar was already so high and that things in Europe seemed so cheap that it was very unlikely that the dollar could go any higher. So we bought a large dollop of pounds at $1.43/pound and opened an account for them at Citibank in London. Over the next year we watched the progress of this marvelous investment as the dollar rose steadily to its peak of $1.04 in the winter of 1985.

Now we should note that the dollar's continuing rise wasn't a total loss. Since we had bought only about one third of the pounds we estimated we would need for the year, the higher dollar — if it stayed that way — meant that the sabbatical year would be cheaper than we had estimated. (Another advantage of what we did was that the money in Citibank in London was in a savings account and British interest rates were 3% to 4% higher than American rates during that year.) So the pounds we had bought were a hedge against the dollar going lower and we weren't hurt too much when it went higher.

Having been brilliant once, we decided, in the winter of 1985, by which time the sabbatical in London was definite, that the dollar couldn't go still higher so we bought another dollop of dollars, this time at $1.06/pound. This time we lucked out because $1.04 really was the peak and the dollar slid pretty steadily for the next year and a half. By the time we got to London in September 1985, it was at $1.25 and it spent most of the year we were there between $1.40 and $1.50. So

we did luck out a bit by purchasing pounds before we left on sabbatical.

The moral of this tale though is not that you should do what we did. We think the right rule is to buy some (say, 1/3 to 1/2 of what you think you will need, if you can afford it) local currency of the country you are going to before you go **if** it's current price is one which, if it stayed that way, would leave you pretty well off financially for the year. Then, if the dollar goes up against that currency, you will be better off than you had hoped even though you had bought some relatively expensive currency. If the dollar goes down, you will have provided yourself with a hedge against financial pain or even disaster.

Furnishings

The perfect furnished house or apartment hasn't been invented, much less rented yet. There will always be something wrong with any place you rent. Our experience has taught us two important lessons about furnished abodes.

1. When something is less good or works less well than it should in relation to the rent you are paying, don't hesitate to press your landlord not just to fix it but to replace it if you don't believe fixing it is likely to be satisfactory. In our most recent rented flat, we succeeded in getting a brand new refrigerator and washer/dryer when the original incumbents proved most unsatisfactory.
2. Inevitably there will be things you want which will not have been provided and which you cannot argue should have been provided. These might be an extra lamp or table or more china or silverware. In any case, make your decisions early and go out and buy what you need. Don't wait a month, two months, three months wondering if you should do it by which time you'll start to wonder whether it's worth it given how much time you have left and then you'll never do it and you'll regret it later. Keep a list of everything you've bought and how much it cost. Your landlord just might wish to buy these things from you when you leave. You can, of course, always just give them away to friends.

Charge Accounts

One secret of success of any move for a few months or a year is to accept and fit into the customs of the place to which you have gone and not to complain about the things that are done differently — and, of course, worse — than what you are used to at home. But another secret is to take advantage of whatever conveniences you are used to at home which are also available where you go on sabbatical. So, if they are available, we advise opening charge accounts and applying for whatever other credit privileges are available as soon as you arrive. It will often take a few weeks to get these established because your reputa-

53

tion as upstanding citizens will not be as obvious to vendors who don't know you as it is to you. Again this is something that is best done promptly so that you can "settle in" as soon as possible.

By the way, credit facilities and payment customs are often quite different in other countries from those in the U.S. In Britain many more establishments will take checks than in the U.S. but only if you have a Cheque Card (same size as a credit card) provided by your bank. Gasoline credit cards are not used in Britain or generally in Europe but virtually all stations take Visa and Mastercard. There are still milkmen (maybe milkwomen, too) in Britain who deliver just about all dairy products as well as bread and even potatoes. But, when the monthly bill is left, don't send a check to the company. Pay the milkperson directly.

Chapter 9
Travel

Although most academics are pretty seasoned travelers, there are aspects of traveling, when you go away for a year, which differ from normal professional or vacation trips. Some of the things we've learned from a lot of sabbatical traveling as well as many other long trips may be useful to you in planning a sabbatical. Most of this chapter will be much more relevant to trips abroad than in the U.S.

How to Go — and Return

If there is no ocean between you and your sabbatical institution, then you will almost certainly drive and that's that. Still, if you are going a long distance, don't need two cars where you are going and can afford it, you may want to consider sending one parent with small children by plane while the other drives with the rest of the family. We still remember with horror a drive from New York to Los Angeles in 1962 at the start of a summer in California with two boys aged not quite three and not quite two. We — anyhow, one of us — was dumb enough to insist, on grounds of economy, that we return the same way. We've never been closer to a divorce! We got as far as Reno with two diarrhetic kids, sold the car (it was already ancient and had been given to us by the parents of one of us) to the hotel bellboy and flew home.

Another possibility, particularly if you are going coast-to-coast or nearly so, is to arrange to buy a new car where you are going or at some scenic place on the way if it is about the time to do that anyhow. Driving across the U.S. is the surest way we know to doubt the wisdom of the Louisiana Purchase. We know there must be Kansans and Nebraskans who love their states but it certainly can't be because they're fun to drive through.

At one time, if you were going to Europe, there was a real choice to be made between plane and ship. In 1971 one of us went by plane with two children to look for housing while the other followed with the two younger children on the "France." At that time the fares were more or less comparable. Since, in order to go away for a year with four children, we had a massive amount of baggage, it was probably cheaper to take the ship because the excess baggage charges on the plane would have been enormous. (Back then, the allowance per full fare person was 44 pounds. Now it is two normal size suitcases. Of course, if we had been smart enough to ship a lot of the baggage ahead of time, this would not have been an issue. But we weren't because we didn't realize you could just ship trunks to be kept in storage if you didn't have a home to ship them to. Be forewarned, though. Storage charges

can be quite large after the first week or so.) Returning from that sabbatical in 1972, all six of us traveled on the QE2 because it wasn't more expensive and because, if you can spare the time, ships are a lot more fun than planes.

But 1972 was the last time we took a ship to Europe. Not only are there many fewer ships which ply the Atlantic now than there were then but, additionally, the cheapest plane fares are much less than ship fares. (Well, maybe not if you take into account the five or more days vacation on the ship compared with the cost of plane fare **plus** the cost of those same days once you get to Europe.) Anyhow we used planes exclusively in 1978-79 and 1985-86, always by the cheapest (or almost cheapest) fare available. We recommend the use of a travel agent even if you've never used one before. Even though in recent years a carrier like PeopleExpress (before its demise) has had the lowest advertised fares (and we have taken PeopleExpress very pleasantly across the Atlantic), sometimes the large carriers (British Airways, Pan Am, TWA etc.) have fares almost as good which aren't advertised. Some of the smaller, less well-known airlines are quite good, too. We had a very good round trip on British Caledonian (which probably won't exist by the time this in print because it's just been bought by British Airways), particularly the return where we were bumped up from tourist to Super Executive(!).

Buying a Car Abroad

First, do you need a car abroad? If you are going to be based in any large or even medium-sized European city, you and your family will certainly be able to rely on the public transportation system which is first class almost everywhere in Europe, certainly much better than the U.S. counterparts. Thus, you may well not **need** a car. But, perhaps because as Americans we've just gotten too used to the four-wheel way of life or perhaps because it really **is** just nice to have a car even if you don't actually need it, we've always bought cars when we went to Europe and then brought them back to the U.S. with us. Since you are likely to want to do a lot more travelling during a sabbatical year than you normally do, using your own car will usually be much more pleasant and convenient than using planes, trains, buses or rented cars, good as all three of the former are in most non-American countries.

In 1959-60 we spent a year in Leeds in the north of England, not on sabbatical but on leave from a job at the Bell Telephone Laboratories. That year we bought an English Ford Consul — we still remember the price: $1600 — which we brought back to the U.S. and drove for seven more years before it died. We didn't decide to buy this car until after we were already in England. So we just went to a dealer and bought it. Back in those days there was no such thing as an "American specification" car except perhaps in some fairly trivial aspects. Thus, you didn't have to worry about whether the car would meet U.S. requirements

when brought back to the U.S. Nowadays "American specifications" involves a variety of things including anti-pollution devices, safety glass and other things which may not be standard on European cars. You don't really have to worry about this so long as you specify "American specifications" when you order a car.

In 1971-72 we bought a Volvo station wagon which was delivered to us in London. Even that cost only $3100. We put 12,000 miles on it, brought it back to the U.S. and then drove it for almost 12 more years. In 1978-79 we had a Rabbit delivered to us in Brussels for just over $5000, drove it to Israel (where one of us was running a conference) and then back to London. (Well, to be accurate, we put the car on a boat from Athens to Haifa and return.) Again we put about 12,000 miles on it before bringing it back to the U.S. In both 1978 and 1985 we arranged delivery of the car through an organization in New York which specialized in such things — Car-Tours-in-Europe, if memory serves. But this organization doesn't exist any more and neither, so far as we could find out in 1985, does any similar U.S.-based organization exist. We note that, on both the Volvo and the Rabbit, as well as the Consul before them, we saved considerable amounts over what a U.S. delivery would have cost, on the order of 10-15% anyhow.

In 1985 we felt affluent enough to afford a somewhat better car than a Rabbit but we thought that cars like Volvos had just become too expensive. We thought that our experience with buying cars in Europe had made us pretty sophisticated about this sort of thing. One thing we believed was that you just couldn't save very much any more, except on a very expensive car (say, a Mercedes) by having the car delivered in Europe and then bringing it back, over what you would pay for U.S delivery. So we were thinking about something like a VW Jetta. Then it just happened that one of us on a trip to Europe several months before the start of our sabbatical discovered just how unsophisticated we were and that you could, indeed, save a considerable amount on even medium-priced cars. You don't have to be Michael Deaver and you don't have to buy a BMW to get a very good deal on buying a car in Europe.

The first rule is: Don't arrange the car delivery abroad through a U.S. dealer. Most foreign car dealers in the U.S. can arrange such delivery of an American specification car at the factory or (for a non-trivial extra charge) at most of the major cities of Europe at a price which typically includes the charge for shipping back to the U.S. The total package will typically save you something over a U.S. delivery but, even for a quite expensive car, the savings will not be that great. In judging the price, you must remember to take into account:

— the import duty you will have to pay on return to the U.S.; this is not a large amount because the duty is currently only about 2 1/2% of the value of the car and the valuation will be based on the cur-

rent (used) value of the car.
- you will still have to pay sales tax when you register the car in your home state although this, again, will be based on the used car value.
- since lead-free gasoline is almost unobtainable in Europe (this is changing gradually and, by the end of the decade, the laws in most European countries will approximate U.S. laws about the use of lead-free gasoline in new cars), your car will have to have its catalytic converter installed before it is shipped to the U.S. The price you would pay to a U.S. dealer will probably include the cost of doing this but it won't include the cost of getting the car to the place where this must be done (probably the port from which it is to be shipped).

So what do you do? You arrange for the delivery of the car through a dealer or agent in Europe who specializes in that sort of thing. Most, if not all the manufacturers have dealers in major cities who specialize in export cars. For example, on Baker Street in London there is a VW-Audi dealer just for export cars. We tried this dealer in April 1985 when we realized that delivery of an Audi (4000) in Europe could be arranged for almost $3000 less than through an American Audi dealer. (The $3000 is a bit misleading; it doesn't include the shipping back to the U.S. which cost about $500.) Arranging for delivery of the Audi through this dealer didn't work because April 1985 was just after the time when the dollar was at its all time high against European currencies. The result was that Americans had bought up just about every Audi in sight. The earliest delivery the dealer could give us was in October but we wanted the car in July.

Our solution was a small firm, GT Vehicle Exports, whose advertisement we had seen in the International Herald Tribune and which specializes in arranging the export of fairly expensive and very expensive European cars. Most of their business is with big American companies or rich Arabs but they are willing to serve the occasional college professor. You might think that, if the Audi dealer couldn't get a car from the factory before October, then an organization that didn't specialize particularly in Audis couldn't either. Wrong! Since a company like GT develops connections with the factories of the cars in which they deal, they can arrange for deliveries which the big dealers cannot manage. So, in fact, we were able to take delivery of an Audi with all the things (color, upholstery, radio etc.) we wanted on the precise day we wished and in a place (Antwerp) very convenient to us.

There are, we should note, some pros and cons in dealing with a car export organization like GT rather than with an authorized dealer. Aside from the better chance that you can get a car when you want one, other advantages are:
- **Delivery Charges.** The cost of getting the car from the factory to where you take delivery will probably be quite a bit less than with a dealer. The cost of delivering the Audi from the factory in Bavaria

to Antwerp was just over $100 whereas with a dealer it would have been nearer $300.

- **Insurance.** If you buy the car through a dealer, you will either have to take the factory insurance (which would have been about $1000 for the year for us) or you will have to arrange the insurance yourself. In 1978 we did find a company in the U.S. which would write an ordinary U.S.-type insurance policy on a car being delivered in Europe but in 1985 there seemed to be none and our very good insurance agent just could not do anything for us. To arrange the insurance yourself with a company in the country to which you are going before you get there would be very difficult, if not impossible. To arrange it when you get to the country in the few days before you take delivery might be possible but you probably wouldn't want to take the chance because, if you didn't succeed, where would you be then? So taking the factory insurance is probably what you would have to do. However, dealing with GT Vehicle Exports we were able to get a considerably better insurance policy than the factory insurance through one of the largest British insurance firms (Norwich Union) at a price (about $550) far less than the factory insurance would have cost. One reason for this was that Norwich Union accepted without question a letter from our insurance agent that we had not had a claim against the policy in 10 years. This entitled us to a "no-claim discount" which reduced the cost by about 50%.
- **Dealer Preparation Costs.** When you deal with an export firm, you take delivery from an agent of the firm and not from a dealer. This, we think, reduces considerably some of the charges usually tacked on by the dealer under the heading "dealer preparation costs".

On the minus side, you don't get quite the service from an export firm that you get from a dealer. When we took delivery of our Audi, there was neither an owner's manual for the car nor an instruction book for the radio. This would not be likely to happen with a car delivered through a dealer. In fact, we didn't get the owner's manual until about three months later and the instruction book until we got back to the U.S.

One thing we never got was a funnel which would have enabled us to deal with European gasoline hoses more easily. Since the nozzle for unleaded gasoline hoses must be installed at the factory for American specification cars, the leaded gasoline hoses in Europe will not fit through it. There is no perfect solution for this but the funnel would help. It was supposed to have been provided with the car but wasn't. We were forced, therefore, to use a screwdriver to hold open the flap over the hole in the nozzle and then to feed the gas in pretty slowly through this hole. No big deal but it did take about three times as long to fill the tank as it does in the U.S.

You should be aware that, if you arrange for delivery of a car in Europe through a dealer or through an export firm, the price will pro-

bably be quoted to you in the currency of the country in which the car is manufactured. Therefore, depending on the vagaries of international currency fluctuations, you make more or less of a killing. In our case we bought when the dollar was quite high — more precisely, we **paid** for the car when the dollar was still quite high — which made our savings somewhat greater than they might have been.

One last point. You may think that one advantage of buying a car abroad is that, when you return, instead of having to ship a lot of trunks, you can just load all your stuff in the car to be shipped with it. You can't do it. U.S. law requires that the car arrive absolutely empty. You can leave the spare tire and the tools but nothing — literally nothing — else.

The Cost of Travel

We suppose that most of our readers know about as much or more than we do about the cost of travel in North America. So we shall say nothing about this except to note that, for a sabbatical, it may be worthwhile to join one of the travel clubs which provides discounts at hotels and motels and through which you may be able to arrange cheaper air fares than through a travel agent.

There are lots of good books on European travel including Fodor's Guides to Europe and the Guides Michelin. Get one or more of these before you leave for Europe. They are available in almost any good book store. We content ourselves here with just a few tips based on lots of experience.

1. If you aren't going to travel by car, by all means consider travel by train using a Eurailpass. These are usable for second-class travel almost anywhere in Western Europe (but not in Britain). Either the one-month version ($440 in 1987) or the two-month version ($620 in 1987) can result in big savings for extended trips. (You can also get a Eurailpass for 15 days, 21 days or three months.) Second class, by the way, is typically very good on European trains. You shouldn't even consider first class unless you have lots of money and the trip is very long. On some trains you can book seats ahead of time and this is a good idea on main routes at busy travel times. The cost of booking is nominal.
2. It used to be the case that you were strongly advised to get an international driver's license if you were going to do any driving in Europe. (These are easily available through the AAA in the U.S.) Nowadays your U.S. driver's license is all you need in almost all countries of western Europe but the automobile clubs still recommend them for a few countries (such as Spain). We didn't know about Spain until just before we left on a trip in the summer of 1985 to drive through Spain from France to Portugal and back again. Of course, what, if

any, driver's license you have is only an issue when you are stopped by the police for a violation. We'd been told that in Spain you might be put in jail overnight even if you had the right kind of license for other than minor violations. Thus, it was with some nervousness that we were stopped not far from Madrid on our way back through Spain by the Guardia Civil for a minor violation (finishing passing another car about 50 yards after the solid white line began again). It turned out, however, that the policeman didn't want to see the license at all, just the car registration and the color of our money, 5,000 pesetas worth (about $30). It seems likely that with Spanish entry into the Common Market (which happened on 1 January 1986) the need for an international license, if it exists at all any more, is likely to decline pretty rapidly. But check before you go. In any case, being stopped for minor traffic violations is one of the possible costs of car travel in Europe just as it may be in small towns on heavily traveled routes in the U. S.

3. You probably know that the cost of gasoline is much higher in Europe than in the U.S., typically about twice the U.S. cost but ranging from about $2.25 to $3.00 a gallon, depending upon the country, in 1985 and 1986. Almost any car you might buy or rent in Europe, however, will get very good gas mileage. One cost you might not expect, however, is the tolls on highways in some countries. In some (notably Britain and West Germany) they are free but in others (notably France and Italy) there are not only tolls but pretty steep ones. To drive through France from the English Channel to Spain (about 600 miles) all the way on Autoroutes, the cost was about $60 in 1985. Of course, there are good touristic reasons to use toll roads as little as possible. But you may be a hurry to get wherever you are going.

Chapter 10

Returning from a Sabbatical

One of the reasons we recommend so strongly full year rather than just one semester sabbaticals is that the planning to come back from sabbatical is non-trivial and takes a lot of your time the last few weeks you are away. When this is added to the time it takes you to get acclimated at the beginning, there won't be an awful lot of time left to do nothing but devote yourself to the purposes of — and enjoyment of — the sabbatical.

Here is a list of things which you have to consider in planning your return:

1. Shipping your baggage — clothes, books etc. — back is, in principle, just the same problem you had when you left. But, if you go to a foreign country, customs and laws may necessitate doing things differently. Sometimes, for example, the cost of shipping things depends on what kinds of trunks or boxes you use. Also the paperwork for exporting even your personal effects — as well as importing them into the U.S. may be considerable. (Example: For things which are not going to accompany you from abroad, U.S. customs requires you to fill out Form 3299, Declaration for Free Entry of Unaccompanied Articles, which covers re-entry of all personal effects you took with you but, generally, not things you acquired abroad.) So, in plenty of time, find yourself a shipping agent, get all the necessary forms, plan what you're going to ship and what you are going to take with you, buy the additional trunks you'll need for all that stuff you acquired while away and, generally, get the process started a few weeks before you leave so that you won't be too frantic at the last minute.

2. If you are coming back from abroad and you bought a fair amount of stuff while you were away, then you may need to plan carefully what you bring with you and what you ship separately. Current rules are that the first $400 you acquired abroad is exempt from customs duty. This applies to **each** returning member of the family. For the next $1000, you pay a flat 10%. This includes, by the way, all clothing and household articles owned for less than a year which will be the case for almost, if not everything you have bought. For things like clothing which have been used, the valuation will be based on the used rather than the new value. For things you ship separately you will have to pay duty on the full (new or used) value at whatever the rate is for the particular item. Current rates range from 2.6% for cars to over 20% for a lot of clothing and jewelry.

Before you go, we advise getting the U.S. Customs booklet,

"Know Before You Go" as well as a listing of the current duty rates on most items.

3. If you are going to ship a car from abroad, this will probably take special planning. The first thing you will probably have to do is arrange to get the anti-pollution device (catalytic converter) installed. One way to do this is to take the car back to the factory where it was built. A better plan, probably, is to take it to the port from which the manufacturer normally ships cars to the U.S. at which there will be facilities to install the converter. Typically there is no cost for this since the cost was already built in to the price you paid for the car.

   It used to be the case that you could arrange to ship a car home yourself or use whatever facilities the manufacturer provided. In both 1972 and 1979 we found it considerably cheaper to arrange our own shipping through firms we dredged up in London and had no problem whatever either time. (In 1979 the elapsed time from when we delivered the car to the shipping agent to its arrival on the dock in Port Newark (New Jersey) was about one week.) By 1986, however, the U.S. laws on anti-pollution devices had changed so that this option was no longer open. You now have little option but to deliver the car to the manufacturer for the installation of the converter. By the way, when you pick up your car in the U.S. — or, for that matter, any dutiable goods you have shipped from abroad, be prepared to pay the customs duty on the spot. A personal check is OK.

4. Don't forget to plan your actual homecoming. It would be embarrassing to arrive at your front door to find your tenants still ensconced. Hopefully, you arranged the lease so that it would expire before you wanted to return. And, hopefully, the tenants actually left on time. But make sure you keep an eye on this. Make sure, too, if you can, that the last couple of months rent has been paid. You'll also want to arrange with the tenants whether they wish to be present when you inspect the house for damage. (Happily, they usually won't be able to be.) Finally, you'll want to arrange to put the utilities back in your name and to start up phone service again. These are things you'll probably want to see to before you get back yourself so that your house is "working" when you arrive.

Chapter 11
Sabbaticals in England

If there is one thing about sabbaticals which we really feel expert about, it is sabbaticals in England, particularly in London. The fact that we have spent our three sabbaticals in England probably makes it superfluous to note that we are Anglophiles and so, particularly in this chapter, you should put our comments through a critical filter. Moreover, since one of us was born and raised in Manhattan and the other just across the Hudson in New Jersey, our attitudes to big cities like London may be very different from yours. Not only do we like what cities have to offer — theater, music, sports, museums etc. — but we are not put off at all by what many see as the drawbacks of urban life — noise, bustle, less physical security etc. So, having stated our prejudices, here are our thoughts about sabbaticals in England.

Universities in England

There are, relative to the population, many fewer universities in Britain than in the U.S. This is still true when you include the polytechnics (technical and business colleges) and the colleges of education. Thus, a much smaller percentage of British youth than American youth go to institutions of higher education. In one sense, this is certainly too bad. Britain is still a class-ridden society in many ways and one way is that very few working class children ever even think about post-secondary education. In another sense it is less bad in that almost everyone who does get post-secondary education can benefit from it, something we have increasing doubts about in the United States. Anyhow one result of all this is that just about all British **universities** are good institutions, comparable to the best and near best in the U.S. Therefore, you may feel confident that, during any sabbatical spent at a British university (or research establishment), you will be in the company of able and interesting colleagues and reasonably good students.

Although most of the following are obviously generalizations to which there may be exceptions, here are some of the differences between British and American university life:

— the calendar; British universities generally have three terms of 11 weeks each, the first from about 1 October to mid-December, the second from about the second week in January through the third in March and the last from about the fourth week in April through the third in June. Although the end of the academic year late in June is a drawback relative to most American college calendars, the three and a half week interval between terms at Christmas is a good time

for travel or skiing and the month at Easter is an excellent time for travel, particularly to Southern Europe where the weather should be good and the tourists (relatively) absent.

— the teaching load is usually less than at even the best American universities; there are typically not courses as such as understood at American universities but rather series of lectures on various topics which may or may not continue for a full term; sharing of such series between faculty is considerably more common than at American universities; we guess that few faculty average more than five contact hours a week and some average quite a bit less; there does, however, tend to be more one-on-one student contact with undergraduates and masters degree students than is often the case at American research universities.

Living in London

When one of us grew up in New York in the 1930s and 1940s, it was surely the most cosmopolitan city in the world, still the "melting pot" filled with more nationalities and with more languages spoken than in any other city of the world. In the 1980s London, not New York, is the "world city". Particularly since Britain became a member of the European Community in 1975, Western Europeans have flocked to London to join many immigrants from the old commonwealth. Some are only temporary residents who come to London mainly to learn English, since knowing English, the "world language," is a marketable skill in many places. Others, mainly those from the old commonwealth — the West Indies, India, Pakistan, Cyprus etc. — are permanent residents. Together with the immense numbers of tourists (over 9 million) who come to London from outside Britain each year, the result is a city which to the eye and ear sometimes hardly seems to be an English city.

We find London's status as a world city one of its delights. But, it must be admitted that this change has some negative aspects. Since we have been coming to London, one of us since 1953, the other since 1959, it has changed from being an almost completely English city, which seemed to swallow up effortlessly its tourists, to its present state. One result is that it has become a much dirtier city, in this respect much more like cities of southern Europe than northern Europe. Another is that London is no longer the safest or nearly the safest city in Europe. IRA bombers are one cause of this but only a rather trivial one. All readers of this book will have read of the riots in parts of London in recent years. Although these have been much less destructive and violent than corresponding riots in American cities in the 1960s, they are nonetheless serious. London and Britain are struggling, none too successfully at the moment, to assimilate and — most important — find employment for a growing black and Asian population. The insensitivity of the current British government is not helping. Still, we believe it is

easy to exaggerate the problem. We have driven through riot areas only a few days after the riots occurred when only the most superficial results were still visible. Poverty and bad housing exist in various London boroughs but there are no South Bronxes or Watts. Also there are no ghettos since black and white, Asian and occidental are mixed in all sections of London where any significant numbers of non-whites live. Our guess is that the problems which have led to riots in London will not be solved for a long time but that they will gradually tend to get better rather than worse.

The above needs to be put in context. London is still a city where you can feel safe in its business and entertainment districts and in the residential areas where professors on sabbatical would almost certainly live. And it is still a city where children can thrive and where you can feel safe about letting them go anywhere in the daytime and many places at night by themselves. The British are still the politest people in the world and it is our observation that a surprising amount of this has rubbed off on the immigrant population.

The entertainment — intellectual attractions of London are, it seems clear to us, unparalleled in any other city of the world. Only New York can rival London for theater but the rivalry is pretty one-sided. The West End (the main shopping-entertainment area of London) typically has twice the number of plays running as Broadway, and a smaller fraction of them are musicals. The so-called fringe theatre in London is probably less active than off-Broadway but the whole picture surely favors London. Productions are probably of about equal quality in both cities but the quality of acting on the London stage is incomparably the best in the world. This should be no surprise to anyone who has watched the seemingly unending sequence of fine British actors on Masterpiece Theater on public television. Moreover, London has probably the two finest repertory companies in the world, the Royal Shakespeare Company, which performs simultaneously at the Barbican in London and at Stratford-on-Avon, and the National Theatre company. And theater is still a bargain in London with the top price for straight plays about $20 (at an exchange rate of $1.60 to the pound) and for musicals about $30. (Twofers — two tickets for the price of one — are available for many plays on the day of the performance from a kiosk in Leicester Square.)

Although we claim less expertise about music, London must also have the most active musical life of any city in the world. Does any other city have five resident major orchestras as well as innumerable small orchestral and chamber music concerts? Also, our prejudice is that Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank of the Thames is the most pleasant hall in which we have ever heard music. Of the two opera companies, the Royal Opera at Covent Garden is more famous (top price about $50 but rather more for a top star in a popular opera; as this is written, it is rumored that Covent Garden prices may rise sharply within

the next year). We are partial to the English National Opera at the Coliseum (top price about $30) where all operas are done in English and where some of the productions are quite spectacular.

It is hard to imagine that any city can surpass London in the variety and quality of its museums and galleries. When the British ruled the world, they were great collectors — some people would use another word — and, while there has been some leakage to the United States in recent years, virtually all is on display. (In addition, there are many magnificent things outside of London in museums and great houses open to the public.)

The only aspect of entertainment in which London will seem poor to most Americans compared to American cities is sports. Although basketball and even American football are gaining surprising footholds in Britain and there is some ice hockey, none are played with American professional quality. There is, of course, British football (soccer) and rugby. And London does get some major tennis championships besides Wimbledon. Also there are a few famous spectacles to watch like "The Race" (the Oxford-Cambridge boat race on the Thames each spring). But, all in all, if you are a sports aficionado, you are likely to be disappointed in what London has to offer.

Like most European but few (any?) American cities, London has a first class public transportation system. Londoners are wont to grumble about how much better it used to be. Maybe so, although we haven't noticed any significant decline in three decades of coming to London. In any case both the Underground and bus systems are efficient and easy to use. Some visitors find the bus system intimidating because there are so many different routes on which the famous red double-deckers run. But the routes are well-posted at almost every stop and with a London bus map to guide you, you will find them pleasant and, except for the occasional traffic jam, efficient. Also they are fairly inexpensive. Fares on buses and the Underground (universally called the "tube") depend on how far you go but most tube fares are 50p or 60p ($.80 or $1.00) and most bus fares are 30p to 60p ($.50 to $1.00). The tube fare from Heathrow Airport into central London is £1.50 ($2.40). There are very good weekly and monthly fares for those who use public transportation a lot. (We fear that tube and bus fares may rise steeply in the near future. On 31 March 1986 the Greater London Council (GLC), essentially the government of greater London, ceased to exist and was replaced by separate governments for the 32 boroughs of London. This act of what seems like madness to us occurred mainly because Margaret Thatcher didn't like the mainly Labour governments of London and the other large cities in England. One good thing done by the GLC in recent years is actually to reduce public transportation fares. We think was a very good policy, indeed, since great cities depend for much of their quality of life on good, available public transportation.

(Look at New York!) We're afraid that whoever runs London Transport in the future will not wish to or be able to keep the fares down as the GLC had done.)

Should you have a car in London? You certainly don't **need** one. But we have found it very nice to have one in the three years we have lived in London. While traffic in London has gotten much worse in recent years, it is still not nearly as bad as in New York. Thus, a car is a reasonably efficient means of transportation at most times. Just as important, parking is not a major problem anywhere outside of business hours and, except for the West End and the City (the financial-business district), not a bad problem even during business hours. One measure of this: In 1985-86 we must have spent over 50 evenings at a theater, concert or movie. We always drove and not once did we fail to find an on-street parking place. Only rarely did we have to park more than a 7 or 8 minute walk from where we were going. Occasionally our parking places were technically illegal but we never got a ticket. (But things are changing. Some of the enforcement of parking laws in London has recently been "privatized", as the British say. Since the amount earned by a private contractor depends upon the number of cars caught parking illegally, tickets are likely to be much more prevalent in the future. In particular, if you park on a street marked with a double yellow line (a no-no any time — single yellow lines designate no parking areas during business hours), you are likely to be "clamped". That is, a bright yellow clamp will be affixed to the left front wheel, making the car inoperable. Getting this removed is both expensive and inconvenient. On a recent — May 1987 — trip to London, we saw many more clamped cars than we had ever seen before.) Parking in most residential areas is not a problem either. In some, such as the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea where we lived in 1985-86, you can purchase a sticker for about $75, good for a year, which allows you to park, free of further charge, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at designated spaces on the street. Only a very few times during the year could we not find a space within a 2 minute walk of our flat. One possible drawback to having a car in London is that it may attract what we are told is a fairly large group of professional car thieves. They are unlikely to be interested in a left-hand drive, American specification car but they might be interested in accessories. Indeed, our car was broken into once in 1985-86 (by smashing a window) but we think this was more likely by a drunk from a nearby pub than by a professional since a feeble and unsuccessful attempt was made to steal the radio-tape player.

Until about 10 years ago, cuisine in Britain had a deservedly bad reputation. Until then, outside of London, it was not easy to find a really good restaurant and easy to find really bad ones. Now there are many good and some spectacular provincial restaurants (the Good Food Guide is a good source) and many fewer bad ones. London is one of the great

cities in the world to eat in. True, it's not Paris and even the best French restaurants in London (and New York, too, we think) are no better, if as good, as only average restaurants in Paris. But London's ethnic variety provides a choice of good restaurants probably equivalent to any city in the world except perhaps New York. Bad and overrated restaurants can still be found, however. Prices at the $1.60 exchange rate are much like New York although there are plenty of reasonably priced bistros and Chinese restaurants ($10-15 per person).

Our (very unscientific) estimate of the cost of living in London (and Britain more generally) is that, at an exchange rate of $1.60 to the pound, it is marginally cheaper to live in London than in the U.S. counting everything except the cost of housing. This latter, as noted in an earlier chapter, is very expensive in central London, comparable to New York and a few other major metropolitan areas in the U.S. Outside of London housing is much cheaper and, we guess, rather less than in most places in the U.S. for comparable accommodations.

Living in Britain

Our only experience living outside of London was the year we spent in Leeds (an industrial city of about half a million population in Yorkshire, 200 miles due north of London) in 1959-60. But we have traveled widely in Britain since then. Our belief is that you could have a pleasant, rewarding sabbatical at any provincial (i.e. outside of London) university in Britain. Even in the dreariest, most run down cities of the north of England, there are nice residential areas and lovely country not too far outside the city. Indeed, while Britain is not a spectacularly beautiful country in the sense of high mountains or Grand Canyons, it is consistently lovely with, in our experience, only the flatlands of East Anglia being really boring. Our favorite places are the Southwest (Devon and Cornwall) the lake country (northwest) and just about any place in Scotland. But a drive through almost any part of the English, Welsh or Scottish countryside can be lovely. Even in winter Britain is green and pleasant although a bit damp.

Which brings us to the weather. If, like us, you come from a place like Buffalo, the English winter will seem mild and pleasant. Snow is rare in London where a whole winter without any is not unusual. Temperatures below 25F in London are rare and below 20F are almost unheard of. Outside of London it is colder and snow is less rare but even in the farthest north of Scotland the winter is much milder than in the northern part of the United States. But it is grey with only the occasional sunny day from November to March. And it can be grey and rainy almost any time of the year. Still, the beautiful days in spring, summer and autumn have a soft, subdued quality unlike North America or the Mediterranean. We do not, however, recommend a sabbatical in England because of the climate. But in London, at least, the climate

can be pretty much ignored since most of the delights are inside ones.

Finally, we note the widespread opinion that the British are cold and hard to get to know. We have never found them so. If cold means not effusive, that is so but we have found the British not just polite and civil but uniformly friendly and helpful, certainly more so in London than New York and everywhere equivalent to what you expect to find in small towns in the U.S. As the expression goes, some of our best friends are English.

Our bias has probably been obvious in the above. We have loved our four years in England and will probably spend any future sabbaticals there. If we ever retire, we may well go to London permanently if we can afford it. Obviously not everyone will be as Anglophile as we are. But we would be very surprised if you did not have a happy, productive sabbatical in Britain.

Appendix 1

Useful or Fun Books to Read

So far as we know, the literature on or related to sabbaticals is pretty limited. Two books we would recommend are:

These Ruins Are Inhabited by Muriel Beadle, Doubleday, 1961 (now available through Midway Reprint Service of the University of Chicago Press); ISBN: 0-226-03967-6.

> A charming and amusing account by the wife of an American Nobel laureate biologist of a year spent at Oxford in the late 1950s.

Changing Places by David Lodge, Penguin Books, 1979; ISBN: 0-14-004656-9.

> A funny, sometimes hilarious novel about two college professors, one American and one English, who spend a year at each other's institutions.

There must be other relevant books. We hope our readers will tell us about them.

Appendix 2
A Checklist of Things to Handle Before You Leave on Sabbatical

Item	How Long Before Leaving (months)
1. Application	
Applying for grant for half salary	18 - 24
Writing sabbatical proposal	10
Letter to department head applying for sabbatical	10
2. Choosing a Location	
Applying for a teaching or research position	12 - 18
Arranging for a non-paying position	12
3. Renting Your House	
"Spreading the word" to friends	10
Distributing flyer at your institution	3 - 4
Writing to local business and industry	2
Advertising	2
Listing with a real estate agent	2
Checking about homeowners insurance	2
Starting to pack things away	2
4. Renting a Place to Live	
Contacting friends or colleagues for help	4 - 6
Visiting sabbatical location (if possible)	3 - 4
Contacting real estate agents	2
5. Schools for Children	
Visiting sabbatical location	3 - 4
Contacting private schools	2
Contacting public schools	When you arrive
6. Planning Before You Leave	
Finding someone to manage your personal affairs	4 - 6
Ordering a car to be delivered abroad	4 - 6
Arranging things for children not going with you	3
Arranging to stop utilities, telephone	1/2
Arranging forwarding of mail	1/2
7. Travel-related	
Making summer travel plans	6 - 8
Making reservations to get to sabbatical location	2 - 3

Appendix 3
Sabbaticals in SUNY

Although sabbaticals have been part of the American academic scene for many years, it might be wrong to assume that they will always remain so. Since the halcyon days of (relative) university prosperity are over, probably never to return in the foreseeable future, it is well that all faculty looking ahead to a sabbatical realize that threats to the sabbatical system may arise. The history of sabbaticals in SUNY provides a case in point.

In Chapter 1 we remarked that back in 1971 sabbatical approvals were suddenly suspended by edict from the State government in Albany. This dictum was, however, not aimed at SUNY but rather was the outgrowth of a dispute between the Department of Mental Hygiene and some of its employees who also were eligible for sabbaticals. This threatened our 1971-72 sabbatical but, early in the spring, the suspension of SUNY sabbatical approvals was ended and, we think, no serious harm was done to any SUNY sabbatical plans for 1971-72. This incident may be looked upon as a peculiar aberration due to bureaucratic infighting but it does indicate that those in authority do consider sabbaticals to be something which they can use as a lever when they wish to apply pressure on some other issue.

Except for the incident described in the previous paragraph, things remained quiet on the SUNY sabbatical front until 1985 when there was a "audit" by the State Comptroller of sabbatical records. Although this audit resulted in no allegations of intentional misuse of sabbaticals by SUNY faculty, it did suggest that SUNY needed to be "vigilant" in order that the sabbatical program serve the purposes for which it is intended. The call for vigilance resulted from some instances of "irregularities", most of which involved "vague proposals" or sabbaticals where the work performed differed substantially from what was in the proposal. It would be easy — but wrong — to pass this kind of criticism off as meddling by bureaucrats who don't understand what sabbaticals or, for that matter, what universities are all about. Wrong because one result of this audit was to elicit new "guidelines" on sabbaticals from the Provost at SUNY at Buffalo which seemed to indicate that he didn't understand very well what sabbaticals are about either.

The Policies of the Board of Trustees of SUNY state that the "objective" of sabbatical leave is "to increase an employee's value to the University and thereby improve and enrich its program". This objective is to be accomplished through "planned travel, study, formal education, research, writing or other experience of professional value". Specifically stated is that a sabbatical "shall not be regarded as a reward for service". A too literal reading of this would be that those faculty

most eligible for sabbaticals are those who have been least "productive" since they more than other faculty have need for study, education and reinvolvement in research. This would be too literal because it is well recognized that faculty who are active in scholarly activities can use sabbaticals to "recharge their batteries" and perhaps branch out into areas of scholarly activity which their busy schedules have prevented when they were also teaching and performing other non-research activities. But, in any case, no one who really understands what sabbaticals are all about would suggest that they are not needed by those who have not been particularly active in research in the years prior to a sabbatical application. The potential to increase the value of such employees to the university through a sabbatical is perhaps greater than for those active in research.

Nevertheless in a memorandum in April 1985 the SUNY at Buffalo Provost stated that his office had returned some sabbatical requests to deans when the vitas accompanying the request showed "virtually no significant scholarly or creative activity since the last sabbatical". To be fair, this memorandum also stated that the sabbatical leave plans did not promise "any significant improvement in performance or any particular institutional benefits". While it does seem reasonable to require particularly well thought out plans for a sabbatical from a faculty member who has not recently been active in research or other scholarly activity, there is the suggestion in this memorandum that, in fact, sabbaticals are, contrary to the Policies of the Board of Trustees, to be used as "rewards for service".

Since most of our readers are not SUNY faculty members, the worries expressed in the previous paragraph may seem somewhat paranoid. Still, over 20 years in SUNY fosters such "paranoia" because the State government and, all too often, campus administrators give the impression that their appropriate relationship with the faculty is an adversarial one. At SUNY at Buffalo, in particular, we have heard anecdotal evidence that some department heads have recently withheld endorsement of sabbatical requests on grounds of lack of recent scholarly activity. And some members of the faculty of the English Department have claimed publicly that they know of a case where endorsement of a sabbatical request was offered in exchange for an increased teaching load. In early 1986 these problems seem to have been resolved in an agreement on appropriate sabbatical procedures between the Faculty Senate and the Provost.

In Chapter 1 we remarked that it is usual for an institution to require a report of what was done on a sabbatical after you return. In SUNY it used to be the case that this report was to be written before the end of the academic year following your return but a few years ago

this was changed to the end of the first semester after you return. Fair enough. But less fair are letters to those returning from sabbaticals toward the end of that first semester threatening action to recover sabbatical salary if the report is not delivered on time. No friendly reminder, no phone call, just a threatening letter. Yes, this has actually happened at SUNY at Buffalo. To be fair the reason why it has happened is probably not because of total administrative insensitivity or arrogance but probably because the university wants to have such letters in its files the next time an Albany bureaucrat shows up asking about how the university is administering its sabbatical rules. Still, such letters are no way to run any organization.

Our conclusion is that with sabbaticals as with so many other aspects of university life, the vigilance that is really needed is that by the faculty to retain its customary privileges and academic freedoms. Particularly at public universities where state or city bureaucrats or legislators often have a very poor understanding indeed of universities, in general, and sabbaticals, in particular, you should be careful that there is no diminution of traditional sabbatical privileges.

Index

Advertising
  for a place to live ... 37
  to rent your house ... 25-26
Agent, house ... 32-33, 47
Automobile
  buying abroad ... 56-60
  expenses ... 14
  insurance ... 59
  left behind ... 47-48

Banking ... 51-53
  opening new accounts ... 51
  transferring money ... 52
Buying a car abroad ... 56-60

Cancelling services ... 46
Car, *see* Automobile
Change of address ... 46
Charge accounts ... 53-54
Children left behind ... 48-49
Cost
  of living elsewhere ... 15
  of rentals ... 35-36

Depreciation, house ... 23
Driver's license ... 48
  international ... 60

Earned income ... 19
Exchanging houses ... 37
Expenses
  car ... 14
  cost of living ... 15
  house ... 14
  schools for children ... 15
  tax deductible ... 20
  travel ... 14, 17

Furnishings in rentals ... 53

Gasoline, cost abroad ... 61
GT Vehicle Exports ... 58

Homeowners insurance ... 31
House
  agent ... 32-33
  costs ... 35-36
  depreciation ... 23
  expenses ... 24-25
  how to rent ... 25-27
  if you don't rent ... 22
  inventory ... 30, 32
  lease ... 28-29
  maintenance ... 23
  notes on appliances ... 32
  renting yours ... 22-25
  room for storage ... 29-30
  showing to tenants ... 28
  stopping services ... 31, 46
  utilities ... 35-36, 39, 63
  what to leave ... 30

Income taxes ... 15-21
  automatic extension ... 50
Internal Revenue Code ... 15,20
Internal Revenue Service ... 17

Lease, house ... 28-29
Leave of absence ... 16

Mail ... 46

Parents left behind ... 49-50
Paying bills while away ... 47

Real estate agents ... 26, 36-38
Record keeping for taxes ... 20
Returning home ... 55-56, 62-63
Renting a place to live ... 35-39
  advertising ... 37
  costs ... 35-36
  exchanging houses ... 37
  how to find ... 36-38
  questions to ask ... 38-39
Renting your house ... 22-34
  advertising ... 26
  choosing tenants ... 27-28
  horror stories ... 33-34
  lease ... 28-29
  miscellaneous matters ... 31-33
  preparing for tenants ... 29-31
  security ... 28-29
  showing it ... 28
  tax considerations ... 23-25
  using real estate agents ... 26
Research grant ... 16

Sabbatical
  abroad or at home? ... 11
  affording it ... 14-21
  applying for ... 3-8
  as investment ... 14
  books about ... 71
  commitment to return ... 4
  full year or half year ... 9-10
  income ... 14
  pay ... 16
  reports ... 4
  returning from ... 62-63
  where to go ... 10-12
Sabbaticals in England ... 64-70
  cost of living ... 69-70
  London, living in ... 65-69
  universities ... 64-65
  weather ... 69-70

Schools for children
American School in London 43
coping with problems 44-45
cost 15
international 44
language problems 40
private 41-43
public 41-43
Security, lease 28-29
Shipping
a car 58, 63
personal possessions 62

Tax Guide for College Teachers 15
Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens Abroad .. 20
Tax considerations 15-21
Tax home 19

Taxes
handling while away 50
related to house rental 23-25
Teachers Income Tax Guide 15
Tenants
choosing 27-28
how to find 25-26
preparing house for 29-31
showing house to 29-31
Travel 55-61
costs 60-61
expenses 14, 17
going and returning 55-56
guides 60

Utilities 35-36

Notes